

Asger Jorn





The studio in Colombes Photo Luc Joubert



The artist with *Letter to my Son* Photo Gunni Busck

Asger Jorn

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Photo Henny Riemens

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Fig. 1 The school in Jutland where the artist was born. His father was headmaster there Photo Poul Pedersen



Fig. 2 Aged about six

Biographical Notes

1914–1938

1914

Born in Vejrum, Denmark.

Asger Jorn's name at birth was Asger Oluf Jørgensen.

1929

After his father's death, the family settled in Silkeborg, a small town in the center of the province of Jutland. Jorn later regarded Silkeborg as his hometown.

1930–35

Painted small landscapes, portraits and still lifes.

1936–37

Studied under Fernand Léger in Paris.

1937

Large-scale decoration for Le Corbusier's *Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux* at the World's Fair in Paris. His lifelong friendship with Matta dates from this period.

1938

First one-man exhibition in Copenhagen.

1939–1945

1939

Married Kirsten Lyngborg.

Lived in Denmark throughout the war. Was given two one-man exhibitions and took part in many group exhibitions in Copenhagen.

1941–44

Was a co-founder and leading contributor to *Helbesten* magazine, where he published an article in praise of kitsch art; this was reprinted in the catalogue of the 1964 *Guggenheim International Award* exhibition (bibl. no. 3). He also published in *Helbesten* translations that introduced Kafka to Danish readers. The *Helbesten* group included many of the major Danish artists of Jorn's generation, among them Carl-Henning Pedersen and Henry Heerup. Important minor works of the war period were the *Didaska* watercolors and the *Occupations* etchings.

1945

Change of surname from Jørgensen to Jorn.

1947–1953

1947

Executed tapestries with Pierre Wemaëre in Normandy.

1948

First one-man exhibition in Paris.

At the beginning of November the *Cobra* group was founded by Karel Appel, Constant, Corneille, Christian Dotremont (who became Secretary General), Jorn and Joseph Noiret. *Cobra* is an acronym from Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam. Its goal was to promote spontaneity in art and to challenge the artistic monopoly of Paris. The movement lasted three years, with exhibitions, manifestoes, periodicals and short biographical monographs (edited by Jorn) to document its theories.

1949

An important *Cobra* exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. A meeting of *Cobra* artists took place in a resthouse for architecture students, near Copenhagen (fig. 4). The *Cobra* painters had been given permission to carry out "decorations". They covered the whole interior with murals that extended from the floor upwards and across the panels of the ceiling (fig. 5). Jorn's first marriage broke up in the summer, when he began a liaison with Matie van Domselaer.

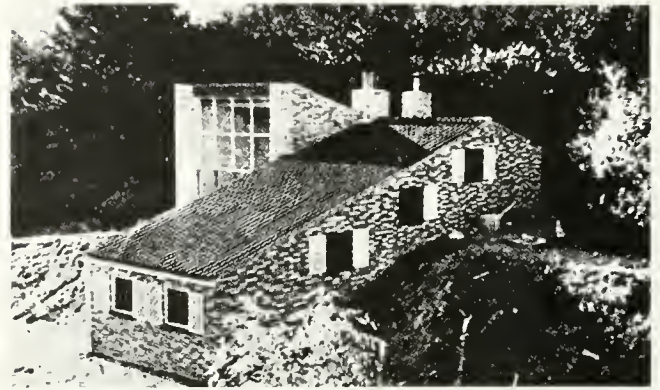


Fig. 4 The resthouse for architectural students which was decorated from floor to ceiling by *COBRA* artists



Fig. 3 An exhibition poster designed by Jorn



Fig. 5 A ceiling panel on which Jorn painted a mermaid

1949–50

Painted a series of *Historical Pictures* and *War Visions* and began the *Agamak* group of animal cartoons.

1950–51

Lived in great poverty on the outskirts of Paris for about six months. Developed severe tuberculosis, aggravated by undernourishment, and had to return to Denmark, where he spent seventeen months undergoing hospital treatment. Jorn married Matie in 1951. Wrote two books while in the hospital and worked on two cycles of paintings: *The Seasons* and *On the Silent Myth*.

1953

Made a large number of ceramics in Silkeborg and nearby. Took the important decision, at the end of October, to leave Denmark and seek his luck abroad.

1953–54

The winter was spent in recuperating in a pension in Switzerland.

1954–1959

1954–55

Traveled to Albisola, Italy, in the spring of 1954 and made ceramics there with Appel, Enrico Baj, Corneille, Lucio Fontana, Matta and others (fig. 7).

1956

Acquired an apartment in Paris and prepared paintings for an exhibition at Galerie Rive Gauche the following year.

1956–58

Jorn's breakthrough to maturity as an artist belongs to this period. His international recognition can be said to date from 1958 when *Lettre à mon fils* (cat. no. 9) was shown in *50 ans d'art moderne* at Expo in Brussels.

This painting held its own against canvases by de Kooning and other world ranking names.

Published *Pour la forme: Ebauche d'une méthodologie des arts* (bibl. no. 2) and played a leading part in the *International Situationist* movement (bibl. no. 8).

1959

Made a gigantic ceramic mural in Albisola in the summer and had it transported in the autumn to Aarhus in Denmark for reassembly. Began the *Modifications* series (sentimental old canvases bought in junk shops and overpainted), which he continued to produce until 1963 (cat. no. 29).

Started to enlarge the modern art collection at the Silkeborg Kunstmuseum by generous donations of his own and other artists' works. This collection ultimately grew so large that a new building was opened this year to house it (bibl. no. 25).

Jorn's concern from now on was to dodge "the great artistic success machine" (Cyril Connolly) by keeping out of the limelight and finding plausible schemes for spending unwanted money.

1960–1967

1960–63

Luxury Paintings, using dribble techniques, were shown in London. In 1962 he was given a first one-man exhibition in New York. Made important collages and *décollages* which were shown in Munich and Paris.

Resigns from the *International Situationist* movement and began to travel widely through Europe in search of Scandinavian art from prehistoric times to the early Middle Ages (bibl. no. 4). He accumulated about 15,000 original photographic negatives and prints which are now housed in the Silkeborg Kunstmuseum; some were published in three books on Viking art sponsored and financed by Jorn.

1964

First major international retrospective, primarily of paintings, at the Kunsthalle Basel, touring to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Louisiana Foundation in Humlebæk, Denmark.

The artist's fiftieth birthday was marked by a first book on him in English, a bibliography of his writings and an illustrated study of the Aarhus ceramic mural (bibl. nos. 11–13).

1965

Short visit to Mexico and the United States.



Fig. 6 Jorn with his family in Albisola Photo Gunni Busck

1966

This was an important year because Jorn began to concentrate again on painting, after a long period of distraction. He spent the summer in London preparing for an exhibition of oil paintings in London and of acrylics for New York.

In the Beginning was the Image (cat. no. 44) was shown at the Salon de Mai in Paris. The title expresses a concept that was considered by Jorn to be fundamental.

1967-1970

1967

Visited Cuba at the suggestion of Wifredo Lam (fig. 8). In Havana he painted the interior of a building, which had once been a bank, with large murals reproduced in *Jorn/Cuba*, 1970 (bibl. no. 16).



Fig. 7 Ceramists in Albisola. From l. to r. Jorn, Dendal, Mrs Matta, Enrico Baj, Matta, Corneille Photo Henny Riemens



Fig. 8 Wifredo Lam (centre) with Jorn (left) and Carlos Franqui, a Cuban friend Photo Corrales

1968

Jorn was in Paris at the time of the May riots. He made some small posters for the occasion but did not take an active part in the events. Published, jointly with Noël Arnaud, *La langue verte et la cuite*, a monumental satire on Claude Levi-Strauss (bibl. no. 6).

1970

Made colored woodcuts of outstanding quality in Munich. Traveled to the United States in the wake of a successful exhibition in New York. There he met Nanna Enzensberger, whom he was later to marry. By now Jorn had settled in a spacious studio built to his own design in a house he had bought in Colombes on the outskirts of Paris (figs. 9 and 10). There he painted a number of masterpieces in large format, as well as smaller pieces (cat. nos. 50-61). The exhibition *La luxure de l'esth  sie*, which took place in Paris late in the year, showed that Jorn was enjoying a renaissance of his creative strength as a painter. The years 1956-59 and 1969-72 were the high points of his artistic career.



Fig. 9 In front of the studio in Colombes *Photo John Lefebre*

1971-1973

1972

During the last phase of his life Jorn devoted his energies to sculpture. He made twenty-three bronzes and, at Carrara, six marble sculptures (bibl. no. 18). Most of the bronzes were figures representing humanoid personalities, with all the ambiguities of posture and gesture that characterize his paintings.

1973

In February a large and carefully chosen retrospective was presented by the Kestner-Gesellschaft. After Hannover its tour included Berlin, Brussels and two venues in Denmark.

Jorn died of cancer in the Aarhus Municipal Hospital on May 1. The cremation took place in Denmark. His grave is in Gotland, the Swedish island he had visited several times to collect data for a book on Theodoric the Great. The book was published posthumously.

Guy Atkins



Fig. 10 With Nanna in Colombes *Photo John Lefebre*

Troels Andersen, Director of the Silkeborg Museum of Art, here bridges the gap between Jorn's debut as an artist in the 1930s and his achievement of maturity twenty years later.

The exhibition, on the other hand, begins with the mature paintings of the middle fifties. Therefore none of the paintings illustrated in this essay will be found in the exhibition.

(Ed.)

Asger Jorn: The Formative Years

by Troels Andersen

Now that Jorn's work can be seen in perspective and viewed as a whole, he stands beside Edvard Munch as a major figure in Northern European painting. He was thirty in 1944 when Munch died, and their contributions are, of course, very different. Munch painted picture after picture of the lonely individual searching for companionship with his fellow men and with nature. For Munch these were the important human considerations. Whereas Jorn, always surrounded by others, examined his situation critically and with scepticism, irony and humor. At the same time he sought to develop his Nordic vision within a long historical perspective.

Not many of the articles written on Jorn during his lifetime capture more than a fraction of his mental processes or modes of expression. But one of the statements which struck home came from Werner Haftmann (bibl. no. 10), who spoke of him as a "night person". Jorn pondered this phrase, which, he said, "shocked me enormously because my most conscious need is my longing for light".

He was strongly aware of the conflicting approach to life, art and culture that prevailed in Northern as against Southern Europe. For him this factor constituted a vital field of energy and tension. In his posthumous work *Alpha and Omega* he wrote about the burning question of the Nordic element in his own art:

"I don't know what Nordic art is worth in other people's minds . . . but in today's cosmopolitan art world it doesn't figure at all . . . Nordic art is dangerous. It compresses all its power *inside* ourselves. It is not a hedonistic or sensuous art. It neither claims to be objectively intelligible, nor does it deal in clear and conscious symbols. The Danish author Jakob Knudsen hit on something important when he said that Nordic art has *mood* and works on the *mood* more than on the senses or the understanding . . ."

Throughout his life he came up against mutually irreconcilable attitudes and alternatives, in art as well as in life. He most often tended to avoid a choice, preferring to seek a solution or to free himself through the confrontation. He saw himself as the eternal wanderer and survivor, as *Buttadeo*, a head on legs (fig. 11).

"A prisoner of his time" was how an American critic labelled Jorn a few years after his death. But, it must be added, one of the few able to escape and survive.

After 1930 a new generation began to break ground in European art. These artists were born just before the First World War (and they inherited a no-man's-land). On the one side were groups which had striven for novelty during the twenties. On the other were those who wanted to preserve "the traditional values" in spite of the unstable situation. This dichotomy was reflected in architecture where traditional concepts of style and craftsmanship were confronted by functionalism; or in painting where, for example, Italian metaphysicians converted to a new classicism. As regards Germany, Oskar Schlemmer's Bauhaus wall decorations were, in 1930, painted over at the request of the man who, some years later, headed the campaign against "degenerate art". Confidence in dynamic change and progress, which had marked artistic as well as social attitudes in Europe, disappeared – even in the Scandinavian countries. But the Scandinavians, as often before, followed a different path from their Southern neighbors.

The new generation of artists in Denmark continued to practise a form of art which was to be suppressed in



Fig. 11 *Buttadeo*, the eternal wanderer

Germany from the time of the Nazi takeover. The young Danes mounted two large international exhibitions in Copenhagen, *Cubism-Surrealism* in 1935 and *Linien (The Line)* in 1937. These can be compared with the two important New York shows of 1936: *Cubism and Abstract Art* and *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism*. These four exhibitions were the biggest pre-war surveys of modern European art (whose sky was soon to be blacked out). The young Danish artists had managed to bring together a selection of outstanding works by Kandinsky, Mondrian, Klee, Arp, Dali, Tanguy, Ernst, Miró and others. Their own works hung alongside those of the European masters whom they had themselves visited in studios and galleries in Paris.

The two Danish exhibitions were unique in their composition and quality (though the artistic level was in inverse ratio to the public response!). The shows were not only the result of direct contact with the most important artistic ideas of the interwar years, but they also showed that lessons had been learnt from these contacts. For instance, the new generation in Denmark did not find it necessary to choose between the opposing schools of the twenties. What had been separated into *two* exhibitions in New York was here, in both shows, merged. Admittedly, the 1935 exhibition was partly tracing the development from Cubism to Surrealism and partly programmatically Surrealist, but the 1937 *Line* show demonstrated clearly that the movements were seen as being parallel. To the young Danes, Kandinsky's abstract works and Tanguy's unreal beaches, Giacometti's figures and Miró's signs were all equally attractive.

The *Line* group included the painters Richard Mortensen, Ejler Bille, Carl-Henning Pedersen, Egill Jacobsen and the sculptor Sonja Ferlov Mancoba. At the 1937 exhibition they were joined by a young provincial, a couple of years younger than themselves, called Asger Jørgensen, later known as Jorn.

Jorn came from an area of Jutland that was bereft of art. Jorn's father, faced with the choice of being either a preacher or a teacher chose the latter. He married another teacher, had six children, and died early. Because the children were to receive the same education as their parents, the family moved to the town of Silkeborg in Central Jutland in 1929. Silkeborg was a town with a railway station, over 5,000 inhabitants, and in that alone quite different from the villages where the family had lived so far. In Silkeborg there were two newspapers,



Fig. 12 After the father's death the family moved to Silkeborg. Asger is in the back row on the left

a good library, several schools, a teacher training college, and even a circle of artists, gathered around the painter Martin Kaalund Jørgensen. Jorn quickly attached himself to this artist and began to paint under the influence of his powerful, expressionistic style. A critic's comment on one of Kaalund's main works, a large portrait which Jorn remembered many years later, said:

"The picture is the most natural, the simplest thing in the world, a happy outpouring of male strength and spirit. It is painted with palette knife and broad brush, a violent simplification of form and a high concentration of color. The remarkable thing is that this picture, so tough and direct in approach, slowly rises before one's eye, then moves away in space and time . . ."

From such an encounter with form and style, marked by influences from Cézanne, van Gogh and Munch, Jorn began to paint portraits and landscapes of his own. He made his debut in Silkeborg in 1933 with two small paintings, one of which was a portrait of the syndicalist

and workers' leader Christian Christensen, who was to be of lifelong significance to Jorn. In the mid-sixties, in gratitude for the philosophical and political insights he had received, Jorn erected a large memorial stone to Christian Christensen in Silkeborg (fig. 13).

Jorn's first graphic works also date from 1933. They were a set of strongly politico-satirical engravings which exposed the crude side of some of the traditional carols and hymns which were (and still are) an important element in the folk culture of Central and West Jutland.

With his teacher training finished in 1935 Jorn went, the following year, to Paris. He had hoped to study under Kandinsky, but this was not possible since Kandinsky had no "school". So he went instead to Fernand Léger. There he met an attitude to painting which was in strong contrast to the Expressionism he had known



Fig. 13 Jorn made a memorial stone for Christian Christensen in 1963

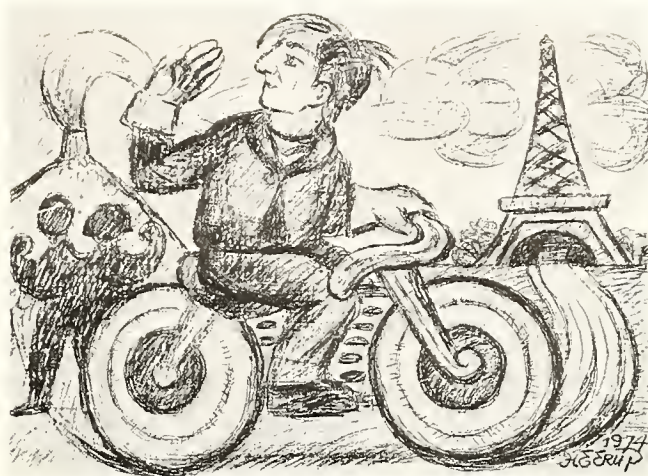


Fig. 14 Arriving in Paris in 1936, according to a lithograph by Henry Heerup

up to that time. In a letter from 1952 he wrote of his impressions of Léger's teaching:

"One day Pierre Loeb said to me that the ideal picture is one which is completely clear in the artist's mind before he puts a mark on the canvas, and this was, at any rate in this period . . . Léger's opinion. It is the basis on which classical art is built. Therefore the setting-down of the picture on the canvas is in itself something quite unimportant. This is connected with Léger's hatred of textural effects in painting. But I love these effects. I remember that I was once told off because I had applied a thick layer of color instead of the thin and even layer that Léger wanted. To him that was not painting but mere color. If he could have got a machine instead of a brush to apply the color, he would have done so."

Léger got Jorn several commissions in order to help him both financially and artistically. Amongst other works Jorn, with two other pupils, was responsible for the execution of Léger's large composition *Le transport des forces* in 1937. Jorn painted the large soft forms which move upwards through the picture. Traces of these forms can be seen distinctly in Jorn's own compositions from the same year.

Thanks to Léger, Jorn assisted Le Corbusier on the *Pavillon des temps nouveaux* at the 1937 Paris World's Fair. Jorn had to enlarge a child's drawing to a big format, to be used at the entrance to the pavilion.

René Renne and Claude Serbanne were among the first critics to write extensively about Jorn (in bibl. no. 23).

They noted the satirical element in many of his works from the late thirties:

"Like Miró before him he uses an uncompromising graphic line to produce a caricature image which is caustic and dry" (bibl. no. 23, p. 78).

Jorn, however, did not allow himself to get trapped either in satire or in the abstract movement's penchant for line and pure form. He merely toyed with these possibilities. In some of his sketchbooks from 1936–37 he practised the motifs and compositions he had found in Kandinsky, El Lissitzky and *De Stijl*. The sketches are drawn with a ruler and compass in India ink, and titled on the notebook covers: *Essays in planes and basic forms* and *Tensions between straight and curved lines*.

Sometimes Jorn borrowed a particular feature of Léger's technique, as when he tinted a canvas in order to work on a colored or tinted base instead of the white gesso. The components of the picture were then imposed on this background either as linear shapes or as outlines colored in. The forms could be modeled plastically or the plane could be emphasized.

Textural asceticism went against the grain and Jorn also fretted at being made to correlate line and form, but he did not yet know how to free himself from these restrictions. One method was to work with accidental shapes, and this was to become a lifelong preoccupation. But in the beginning the techniques of Surrealism were put to good use: collage, frottage, color sprayed on paper with an airbrush or floated on the surface of a bowl of water and lifted off on paper (fig. 15). Another way to break the link between line and plane was by what Arp called the "square-eyed" method or alternately, with Dali, putting one drawing on top of another, using transparent paper. Jorn had availed himself of all these methods and experiments by 1940.

He used collage for a set of unpublished illustrations for *The Stolen Chest of Drawers*, a book by the Danish poet Jens August Schade. Schade had created a glittering narrative that roamed all over the globe, in the air and on land simultaneously, in the subconscious and in realistic environments. Jorn merely had to take him literally! And if the collages resembled those of the Surrealists (especially perhaps Ernst's *Une semaine de bonté* or *La femme cent têtes*, which had inspired the young Danish artists from the time they were first published) they are at the same time completely compatible with Schade's lyrical prose (bibl. no. 23, p. 60).



Fig. 15 *The Girl in Search of Life*, a "frottage" monoprint from 1938

Jorn used Dali's overlay technique in order to *dissolve* the shapes of his drawings, not to evoke clashes between the shapes. Later in the forties he was glad that he could use this method in his encounter with the Danish psychoanalyst Sigurd Næsgaard, who took it upon himself to relate various shapes he found in Danish abstract art to specific psychological "complexes". (In this Næsgaard was partly influenced by Wilhelm Reich, who had stayed a short while in Denmark and whose lectures had been attended by some of the *Line* artists). Jorn had certainly been under analysis with several of Næsgaard's pupils and possibly the man himself, but he nevertheless reacted against Næsgaard's interpretation of art.

To test Næsgaard's thesis, Jorn took one of his own drawings with a complex interlaced pattern and he then asked a number of artists to pick out what they considered to be the *basic* pattern (fig. 16). They drawing had been produced almost automatically and ought therefore to contain some "basic" feature. In the event Jorn re-

ceived as many different “basic patterns” as there were artists! Whatever the basic theme (if any) might be it was impossible to isolate it.

Jorn attached great importance to this experiment. Even after he had published the results in an article, he continued with his inquiries. He drew the attention of Renne and Serbanne to the matter when they were writing about his drawings in the late forties and he explained the experiment to Guy Atkins in the sixties (bibl. no. 15, pp. 45–48). Jorn’s basic conclusion was that a picture is essentially ambivalent. It is not susceptible to just one particular interpretation or reading. This insight carried him beyond satire and beyond the dogmatic non-figurative attitudes at the beginning of his career. Moreover, it was the principal point of view he was to develop consciously in his works of the fifties and sixties.

“Groupez-vous”, said Léger to Scandinavian pupils in the twenties when they left Paris to return home. Jorn did

not need Léger’s prompting. In *The Line* he had seen an example of how mutual discussion and a vigorous exchange of ideas had enlivened and transformed the Danish art scene. But already at that first exhibition in 1937 he found himself at loggerheads with the outstanding personality in the group, Richard Mortensen. Jorn’s



Fig. 17 *The Blue Picture*, 1940, influenced by Ejler Bille

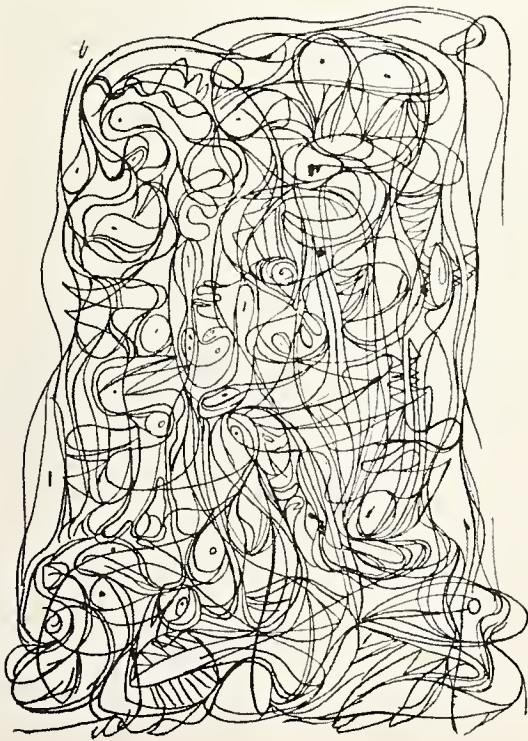


Fig. 16 The key drawing to test Sigurd Næsgaard’s theory

own position was much closer to one of the other leading members, Ejler Bille. In the early forties Bille developed a free all-over manner of composition which made a great impact on Jorn (fig. 17). Bille was also a critic, and at the end of the war he published a collection of articles ranging from Oceanic art to Henri Laurens, Picasso and the Surrealists.

Jorn often joined forces with other artists in exhibitions, magazines or in sharing studios, but as one of his contemporaries said, “He was not really a ‘group person’. He was an egocentric who could do everything by himself, but only after things had developed to the point where there was no longer any need for a group.”

During the war Jorn was the driving force behind the publication of the magazine *Helhesten* (*The Hell Horse*). It printed articles on art, literature, archaeology, film, ethnography, etc. When the first number came out nobody knew what would be the attitude of the German occupation forces. The number contained an obitu-

ary on Paul Klee, whose pictures had been removed from German galleries and destroyed. Moreover, the name of the magazine contained (to the initiated) a sly dig at the German occupying power. But, due to the prevailing cultural confusion, nobody interfered with the magazine which ran until 1944 when it ceased publication for financial reasons.

Few of the articles in *The Hell Horse* have any value as original research, but today they give a vivid impression of a particular circle of people and their interests. The mixture of original lithographs coupled with reproductions and the breadth of subject matter later inspired the Dutch *Reflex* magazine and the international *Cobra* review.

Five years without a chance to travel abroad, without foreign exhibitions or information on art events in other countries, combined with the pressure placed on everyone by the war, produced a closeknit community of artists in Denmark. It was not only artists of the same generation who came closer together, but the bond managed to span the generation gap. In his notes from those years Jorn proposed the idea of combining features of Danish art from the twenties and thirties with the Abstract and Surrealist styles. The Danish art to which he was referring was based on simplified landscape painting with a strong emphasis on color.

It was not unnatural (in view of what has been said) that the "spontaneous abstract" group should exhibit jointly with a number of figurative artists in the *Corner-Høst* art association during and just after the war. At the end of the war this association received a questionnaire from the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Museum was trying to piece together a picture of what had been happening in those countries with whom contact had been lost during the war. Jorn applied himself with enthusiasm to answering the questionnaire. He collected photographs as well as some original works to send off. The Danish association compiled a statement which summarized their views on the developments that had taken place.

The text which clearly bears the stamp of Jorn's ideas drew a distinction between "automatic" abstraction and "constructive" abstraction. The text ran:

"The greatest difficulty arose when transferring the spontaneous method from drawing to painting. If the picture were to be drawn on the canvas spontaneously then the color would inevitably be trapped

inside the drawing and unable to expand naturally. Our most difficult and important achievement, which has given our art its special flavor, is the breakthrough to a liberation of the color element, and so to *painterly* spontaneity."

Jorn was also looking for what he called an "empty creation". In a conversation he told Pierre Loeb that his own goal was "to be completely empty of ideas at the moment of setting brush to canvas, the head being just as empty as the canvas". Renne and Serbanne touch on the same attitude – undoubtedly with one of Jorn's examples in mind – in their text of 1947.

"A child draws and paints *alongside* itself, on a *parallel* course. In doing so it neither liberates nor deliberates; the child is not creating, the object itself is creating; it's not a matter of *internal necessity* (Kandinsky), but of external necessity, which may in fact be the truer of the two.

"Alongside pure creation, i.e. empty creation (which is devoid of art), there exists a conscious creation (even if it's of an automatic order) . . ." (in bibl. no. 23, p. 77).

Serbanne and Renne then quote Ernst who presented the problem in the opposite way. In his picture "Surrealism and painting" a mythical gargoyle traces a succession of straight lines and curves on a canvas to represent "pure design". At this stage Jorn adheres to automatism and ambiguity as his guidelines, in preference to using motifs and figures as carriers of meaning. In 1947 Jorn wrote of modern art in Paris:

"It seems to me that today the Surrealist crisis is the central problem in French art. It is essential for future development that this crisis should be solved . . . The principal error in the aesthetic program of Surrealism is that it is too literary. Painters have experimented with visions, images, dreams, but not with painting, not with color . . . The unpainterliness of Surrealism has inevitably produced a reaction among younger painters."

Here he was not thinking of Danish artists, but of painters such as Bazaine, Estève, Lapique, Singier and Le Moil. He suggest there should be reciprocity: "These artists cannot get any further unless they absorb the lessons of Surrealism into their painting, just as Surrealists can only advance if they adopt the painterly methods of the other group."

This was Jorn's position in 1947 when he joined in the debate that was taking place within the French Surrealist



Fig. 18 *On the Silent Myth, Opus 4b*, a coloured lithograph from 1952

movements, e.g. *Surréalisme-Révolutionnaire*. A year later he walked out of an art conference in Paris. With a handful of Dutchmen, Belgians and a single Frenchman the *Cobra* group (COPENHAGEN-BRUXELLES-AMSTERDAM) was formed. Among the founders were Appel, Constant and the author Christian Dotremont. Jorn's aim in *Cobra* was to merge the Danish notion of "spontaneous abstraction" with the "painterly" aesthetic.

In the many thousands of pages of Jorn's writings one looks more or less in vain for any substantial reference that would explain the content or context of most of his paintings from the fifties and sixties. The problem of



Fig. 19 *On the Silent Myth, Opus 2*, with related studies

"empty creation" with which he had struggled during the period before *Cobra* now gave way to dominant "figures" and "motifs" which obtruded themselves even before the picture was born. Time after time these characters interfered in the automatic process.

In 1952-53 Jorn painted three pictures as a "decoration" for the Library at Silkeborg. Two of them were called *On the Silent Myth* and the other *The Wheel of Life*. Many private symbols and references were incorporated in these paintings. The large number of sketches and smaller related studies point to a longstanding preoccupation with particular themes (fig. 19). In his speech when he presented the pictures to the Library he referred to Johannes V. Jensen, the Danish writer of novels that combined history with legend. Against the *vocal* myth Jorn set the *silent* myth, i.e. the visual image.

Around this time Jorn came under the renewed influence of Munch. In *On the Silent Myth* there are traces of Munch's landscapes, especially in the way in which the forms are enclosed within colored contours and in the choice of the actual colors. Other pictures from the



Fig. 20 *Manly Resistance*, oil on canvas, 1953



Fig. 21 *This is how you were*, portraying the artist's mother

same period, e.g. *Manly Resistance* (fig. 20), are also reminiscent of Munch, whose memorial exhibition in Copenhagen in 1946 had made a powerful impression at the time. The grouping of pictures into thematic cycles also points to Munch.

In his commentary on the *Silent Myth* series Jorn again rejected the idea that a picture could be explained by its content or interpreted in a single direction. Yet from this time onward a new set of figures which could be called "recognizable" begin to appear in his paintings.

In 1953 he made a small ceramic vase with four figures, which he gave to his wife. The figures can be read clearly as two adults and two children. One of the figures is haggard with a kind of gash in its chest, a reference to Jorn's recent recovery from severe tuberculosis. The mother-and-children theme also runs through several paintings and drawings. Picture titles such as *En Famille*, *You were like that* (with a portrait of the artist's mother) (fig. 21) and *Letter to my Son* (cat. no. 9) show that the private sphere is directly involved. In picture after picture one finds distinct and recognizable types of "the father" and "the child". One of the figures in *Letter to my Son* the frequently recurrent "spectator", is repeated in an independent lithograph (fig. 22).

In some versions Jorn looks at family life ironically as a source of discord and conflict (fig. 23), mitigated by the need for co-existence, as in the child-adult relationship. Lovers are shown as alternately hostile and affectionate, with a shifting dominance between the two partners.

Now and then ironical and satirical overtones occur as in *Unwelcome Visit* or *Doggie to Missie*, which are seen elsewhere with menace, e.g. *Attention Danger* (cat. no. 13). This type of reference culminated around 1956–58.

"Portraits" of known and unknown persons (collectors, art dealers, artists and friends) contain references that are sometimes private and esoteric but more often open.

An interesting case is his portrayal of the French literary historian and philosopher Gaston Bachelard, to which he returned no fewer than three times (fig. 26). Each picture is like the memory of a person whose features one is trying to recall. The face floats before the inner eye without sharp definition yet with a convincing "likeness". The portrait of his mother *You were like that* is painted in the same way.

Such factors point to Jorn's kinship with Nordic Expressionism, of which he became more aware after he left Denmark in 1953.



Fig. 22 A coloured lithograph that depicts one of the figures in *Letter to my Son*

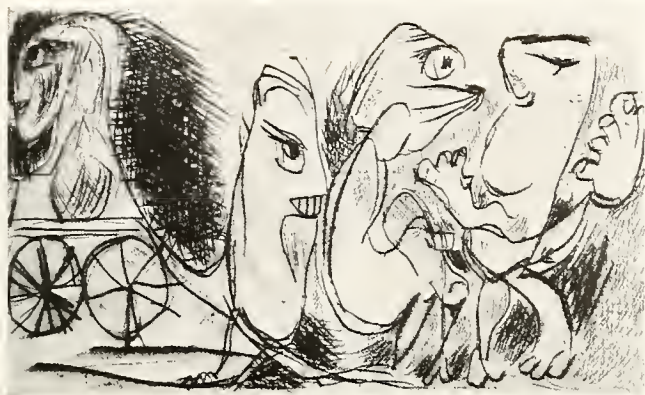


Fig. 23 An etching entitled *Children slanging each other*

The serious bout of illness at the beginning of the fifties left its mark on Jorn's temperament. In a letter to Werner Haftmann in the early sixties he referred to a composition from 1952 called *The Eagle's Share*, to which he returned in a series of versions. This painting, he said, expressed anxiety at several levels, personal and universal (fig. 27).

In *Alpha and Omega* he said about the Nordic concept of Expressionism:

"Nordic art casts a spell on the mind which ranges from laughter to tears and from tears to violent rage. One can see how dangerous it is, we can be tyrannized by a cynical person endowed with the power of art. Munch has been said about this demonic aspect. In it lies the ultimate demand that the artist must take responsibility for the states of mind that he produces, or at least he must answer for them by *knowing them in his own person*. This psychic demand in both the artist and the viewer has made Expressionist art so hated by devotees of aestheticism and formalism."

Jorn had hardly come to terms with his figurative repertoire when he began to feel hostile towards it. He often returned and overpainted parts of a picture: usually only the edges or background of a canvas, but he was capable of throwing synthetic paint over parts of the figure compositions (during the fifties) in a quasi-destructive gesture. A prime target was his big composition from 1956, *The Retreat from Russia* (*La ritirata di Russia*). A year later he obliterated the whole surface under a layer of white, which he applied with a roller or similar implement. From now on subject matter and



Fig. 24 *Unwelcome visit*, 1956, 31½ x 25" (30 x 64 cm.)



Fig. 25 *Doggie to Missie*, 1955, 19½ x 19" (50 x 50 cm.)



Fig. 26 *Gaston Bachelard I*, 1960, 25½ x 32" (65 x 81 cm.)

style became more closely equated. After several years of work Jorn finally gave the picture its title *Stalingrad* (fig. 28).

The starting point in 1956 had been the stories told to him by an Italian friend, Umberto Gambetta, who had served with an Italian regiment in front of Stalingrad. Afterwards followed years of detention in Russian prisoner-of-war camps – experiences that few men survived. References to these events were recorded on the original canvas (now obliterated) causing Gambetta to speak of the picture as "my portrait". Jorn thereupon blotted out the specific personal references in order to increase the universal validity of the painting. He often returned to this canvas, the last time being a few months before his death, when he added a series of black dots (representing houses) to the troubled scene.

Stalingrad is a work, perhaps Jorn's only one, which is marked by pathos. The opposite applies to the experiments he made from 1959 onwards in overpainting old pictures bought in the flea market. The first series consisted of landscapes peopled by fantastic monsters and other intruders. In his notebook Jorn called these pictures "kitsch", and it was only later that they got their French name, *Modifications*. In 1962 he exhibited a new series consisting exclusively of portraits in which the amiable physiognomies of the bourgeoisie were transformed into ill-favored grotesques (fig. 29). The women were surrounded by snarling beasts which beset them or swallowed them up, transforming them into one of



Fig. 27 *The Eagle's Share*, an etching from 1954

Jorn's favourite themes "the animal in woman". The pictures were intended as a provocation, which gives some of them an unprecedented severity which still has



Fig. 28 *The Stalingrad* picture during an exhibition at the Louisiana Foundation in Humlebæk, Denmark

a strong effect. Jorn also satirised the concept of the avant-garde: in one of the pictures a girl candidate for confirmation is given a moustache, and on the wall behind her, addressed to admirers of Duchamp, is written *The avant-garde does not surrender* (l'avant-garde ne se rend pas). The "modifications" had the curious side effect of alienating Jorn once more from figuration. This can be seen in a series from the early sixties, which he called *Luxury Paintings*.

In the *Luxury Paintings* Jorn, fully conscious of the timelag, took up features from action painting and tachisme. He used synthetic paint, which he poured or dripped over the canvas or applied with string dipped in color (fig. 30). Nearly all these pictures lie on the extreme borderline of figuration. Jorn is here combining



Fig. 29 One of the *New Disfigurations* from the *Beauty and the Human Beast* series of 1962



Fig. 30 At work on a *Luxury* picture in 1961

former notions of the "empty" creation and automatism with his current aesthetic. When figures were on the point of emerging, he refrained from clarifying them, so that they remained in the shadowland of the subconscious.

He also used the *Luxury Paintings* to explore notions on color theory, for instance by reducing the main colors in relation to subsidiary ones. These notions were inspired partly by an essay of 1890 on the nature of color by the Danish art historian Julius Lange and partly by the theories of Philipp Otto Runge earlier in the nineteenth century. While he was working on the *Luxury Paintings*, he was discussing these topics in his book *De divisione naturae* (in bibl. no. 5).

Jorn's many experiments were not undertaken at random. He would deliberately return to subjects and problems which he had abandoned in an earlier phase. In the pictures of the sixties and seventies he moved freely between alternatives such as figuration and automatism, mythic figuration and improvisation, not in classical composure but in dynamic tension.

In his later mature works it is often not at all easy to identify elements that are related to actual events, but

a biographical element of some sort is nevertheless seldom far away. When irony and satire are involved, they are as a rule so sensuously embedded in the color, fabric and composition that the result rises above the "occasion". The misogynistic and misanthropic view of human relations shown in many of the works of the early fifties has later lost its bitterness and self-irony.

In the best works of the sixties until the artist's death, color has at last achieved the autonomy which he had so long sought. Now it is the surge of color that dictates the composition – color which in the late works is cleaner and stronger than ever before. Now and then broad brushstrokes appear, done with a brush the same size as that used by Japanese calligraphers. Line drawing is often introduced as a final stage, with pure color applied straight from the tube to bring out a figure. Sometimes a painting is as clearly built up as in certain lithographs: the base is first tinted, then each individual color is disposed in different areas of the plane, as if applied on different stones. The packed, texturally aggressive canvases are rare in the last years. It is more a shift in viscosity from a thin turpentine-fluid color to a denser surface controlled by the palette knife – variations within a limited range.

In the last years, too, Jorn moved over to other media: lithography, engraving, woodcut and, in the very last year, to sculpture modeled in clay and cast in bronze or carved from marble. These figures, too, by presenting a different aspect from every new angle, demonstrated Jorn's extraordinary power of vision, that enabled him to conjure up endless fresh images.

(Translated from Danish by Peter Shield)

Selected Bibliography

By the artist

Books and articles in Danish have been omitted except when – as in the case of the first entry – accompanied by a translation

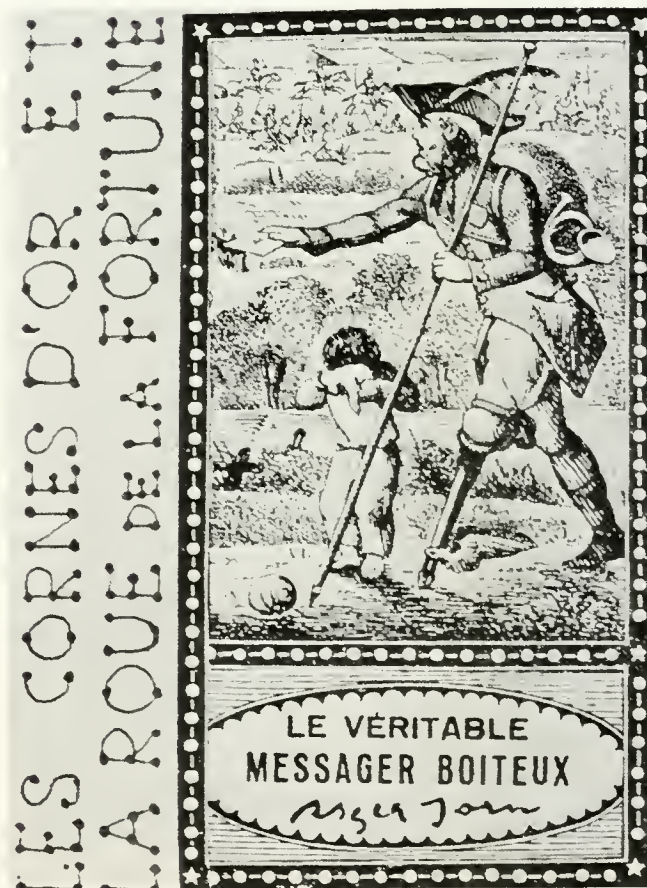


Fig. 31

- 1 *Guldbørn og Lykkehjul: Les cornes d'or et la roue de la fortune*, Selandia, Copenhagen, 1957
- 2 *Pour la forme: Ebauche d'une méthodologie des arts*, L'Internationale Situationniste, Paris, 1958
- 3 "Banalities" in *Guggenheim International Award 1964*, exh. cat., The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1963, pp. 102-103
- 4 *Signes gravés sur les églises de l'Eure et du Calvados*, Borgen, Copenhagen, 1964
- 5 *Gedanken eines Künstlers*, Galerie van de Loo, Munich, 1966
- 6 With Noël Arnaud, *La langue verte et la cuite*, Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie no. 3, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris, 1968
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- 8 Guy Debord, ed., *Internationale Situationniste 1958-69*, Van Gennep, Amsterdam, 1970. Reprinted texts of the 12 issues of *Internationale Situationniste* magazine; includes contributions by Jorn

ASGER JORN

POUR LA FORME

EBAUCHE D'UNE
MÉTHODOLOGIE
DES ARTS

Fig. 32



Fig. 33

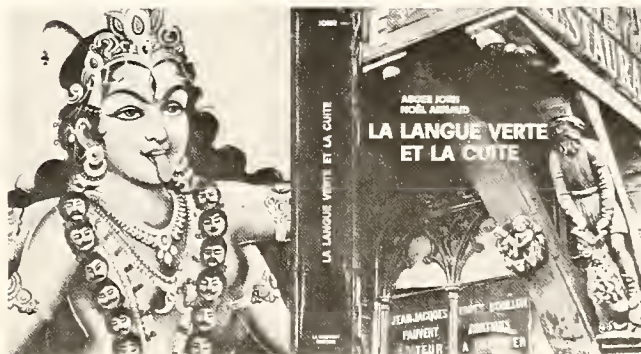


Fig. 34

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- 10 Werner Haftmann, "Asger Jorn", *Quadrum*, Brussels, no. 12, 1962, pp. 61-84
- 11 Guy Atkins, *Asger Jorn*, Art in Progress series, Methuen, London, 1964
- 12 Guy Atkins, ed., *Asger Jorn's Aarhus Mural*, Westerham Press, Kent, 1964
- 13 Guy Atkins and Enk Schmidt, *Bibliografi over Asger Jorns skrifter til 1963: A Bibliography of Asger Jorn's Writings to 1963*, Permild & Rosengreen, Copenhagen, 1964. Text in Danish and English
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- 15 Guy Atkins with Troels Andersen, *Jorn in Scandinavia, 1930-1953. A study of Asger Jorn's Artistic Development from 1930 to 1953 and a Catalogue of his Oil Paintings from that Period*, Lund Humphries, London, 1968



Fig. 35



Fig. 36 The cover of *Jorn a Venezia*, a monograph of Jorn's paintings shown in Venice

Mario De Micheli

Jorn scultore



Fig. 37



Asger Jorn's samlinger

Silkeborg Kunstmuseum 1982

Fig. 38

- 16 Ezio Gribaudo, *Jorn/Cuba*, Fratelli Pozzo, Turin, 1970
- 17 Peter Frank, "Painters Turn to Sculpture: Willem de Kooning and Asger Jorn," *Columbia Daily Spectator*, New York, October 18, 1972
- 18 Mario de Micheli, *Jorn scultore*, Giampaolo Prearo, Milan, 1973
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- 20 *Asger Jorn 1914-1973: A Catalogue of Works in the Silkeborg Kunstmuseum*, Silkeborg Kunstmuseum, Silkeborg, 1974
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Guy Atkins

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Paris, Galerie Rive Gauche, *Arnal et Jorn*, June 1957
London, Institute of Contemporary Art, *Asger Jorn*, Apr. 24-May 1958
Munich, Galerie van de Loo, *Asger Jorn*, Sept. 3-mid-Oct. 1958
Paris, Galerie Rive Gauche, *Modifications*, May 6-28, 1959
Paris, Galerie Rive Gauche, *Trente et une peintures de Asger Jorn*, May 6-31, 1960
Munich, Galerie van de Loo, *Roël d'Haese, Asger Jorn*, Oct. 17-Nov. 30, 1960
Paris, Quatre Saisons, *Le long voyage: Tapisseries 1941-1960*, opening Dec. 13, 1960. Tapestries made with Pierre Wemaëre
London, Arthur Tooth & Sons, *Asger Jorn: Luxury Paintings*, May 30-June 24, 1961

ASGER JORN
1938-58
PAINTINGS

24 April - 31 May
Monday to Friday 10 am to 6 pm
Saturday 10 am to 1 pm
Closed Sundays
Members free — Public 1/-
Institute of Contemporary Arts
17-18 Dover Street London W1

I C A

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Fig. 39



ASGER JORN

KESTNER-GESELLSCHAFT HANNOVER

Wamblerstraße 16, werktags 10 bis 18 Uhr, sonntags 11 bis 14 Uhr, montags geschlossen, 16 Februar bis 16 März 1973

Fig. 40

Venice, Palazzo Grassi, *Arte e contemplazione*, July–Oct. 1961
 Seattle, Washington, World's Fair, *Art Since 1950: American and International*, Apr. 21–Oct. 21, 1962
 Paris, Galerie Rive Gauche, *Nouvelles défigurations de Asger Jorn*, June 1962
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 Munich, Galerie van de Loo, *Asger Jorn: Gouachen, Aquarelle, Collagen und Tuschen aus den Jahren 1950–62*, Jan. 16–mid-Feb. 1963
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Guy Atkins



Fig. 41 A marble sculpture from 1972 among paintings from the 1940s at the Kestner-Gesellschaft retrospective
 Photo Peter Gauditz

Works in the exhibition

- 1 *The Flower of Tunisia (La Fleur de Tunisie)*. 1954
Oil on canvas, 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 19 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (68 x 48.5 cm.)
Lent by Galerie Jerome, Copenhagen
Photo Koefoed Fotografi



- 2 *Tubercular Camelia* (*Camélia tuberculeuse*). 1956
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 32¼ x 25⅝" (65 x 82 cm.)
Private Collection



- 3 *Guillaume Apollinaire. 1956*
Oil on canvas, 49¼ x 39⅞" (125 x 101 cm.)
Collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam



4 *Ossian*. 1956
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (81 x 65cm.)
Lent by Galerie van de Loo, Munich

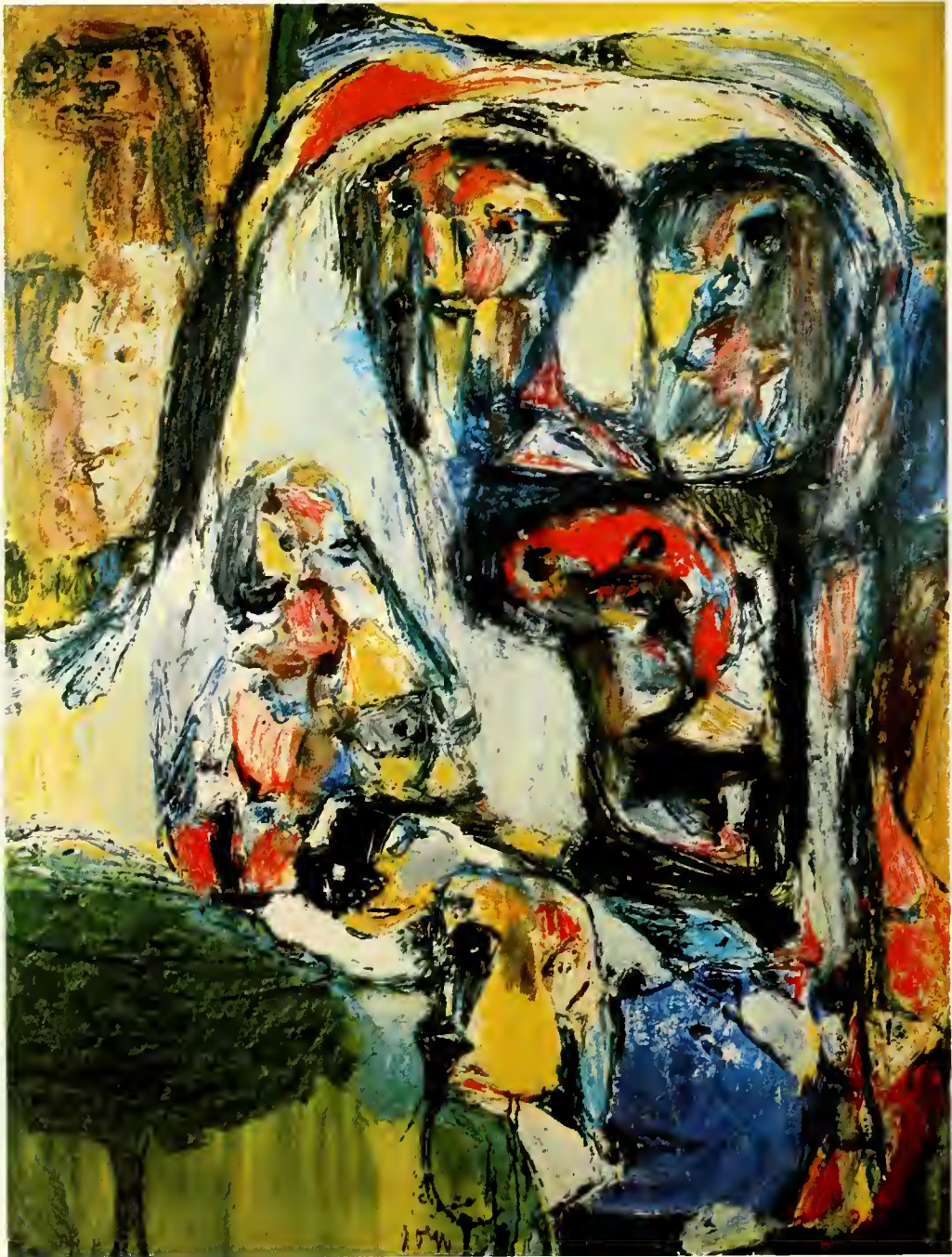




- 6 *Encounter at the Fair (Rencontre à la kermesse)*. 1956
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (100 x 80 cm.)
Collection Stéphane Janssen, Beverly Hills
Photo Paul Bijtebier



- 7 *Awaiting the Sacrifice (En attendant l'offrande)*. 1956
Oil on canvas, 57 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (145 x 110 cm.)
Private Collection
Photo Bressano



- 8 *Feast of the Living Fish (Festa dei pesci vivi)*. 1956
Oil on canvas, 43 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 57 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (111 x 147 cm.)
Private Collection
Photo Bressano



- 9 *Letter to My Son (Lettre à mon fils)*, 1956-57
Oil on canvas, 51¼ x 76¼" (130 x 195 cm.)
Lent by Galerie van de Loo, Munich



- 10 *Revolt in the Valley (La Vallée en révolte)*. 1957
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Private Collection



- 11 *The Timid Proud One (Le Timide orgueilleux)*. 1957
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (100 x 81 cm.)
Collection The Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London
Photo Gérard Franceschi



- 12 *The Years that Count (Les Années qui tiennent)*. 1957
Oil on board, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (100 x 81 cm.)
Private Collection



- 13 *Attention Danger*. 1957
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (100 x 81 cm.)
Collection Henie-Onstad Artcenter,
Høvikodden, Norway



- 14 *Shameful Design upon a Girl's First Fruits*
(*Projet honteux avec une jeune fille aux primeurs*). 1957
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (100 x 80 cm.)
Collection Mrs. Phoebe Atkins, London



- 15 *Static Ballet (Ballet immobile)*, 1957
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Lent by Galerie van de Loo, Munich



16 *Sentimental Parley (Colloque sentimental)*. 1957
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (81 x 100 cm.)
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- 17 *The Stubborn Bird, II (L'Oiseau têtu, II)*. 1957
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (100 x 81 cm.)
Collection Laurini, Milan



18 *Half-moon (La Demie lune)*. 1957
Oil on canvas, 54 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 40 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (137 x 102 cm.)
Private Collection
Photo Bressano



- 19 *The Mixed Show (L'accrochage)*. 1958
Oil on canvas, 38¼ x 51¼" (97 x 130 cm.)
Collection Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven,
The Netherlands
Photo Maurice Poplin



- 20 *Lovers' Walk (Promenade des amoureux)*. 1958
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (100 x 81 cm.)
Private Collection



- 21 *Sirocco (Föhnbild)*, 1958
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (100 x 80 cm.)
Collection Prelinger



- 22 *Loss of Center (Verlust der Mitte)*. 1958
Oil on canvas, 44 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (114 x 146 cm.)
Collection Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Gent



- 23 *Re-encounter on the Shores of Death*
(*Wiedersehen am Todesufer*). 1958
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (100 x 80 cm.)
Lent by Galerie van de Loo, Munich
Photo Dietrich Freiherr von Werthern



24 *Woman of October 5th (Femme du 5 octobre)*. 1958
Oil on canvas, 25 x 30 7/8" (63.5 x 76.3 cm.)
Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne,
Centre d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris



- 25 *Serendipity Ashore*, 1958
Oil on canvas, 25¼ x 30" (64 x 76 cm.)
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Leon A. Arkus



26 *The Bridge (Le Pont)*. 1958
Oil on canvas, 51¼ x 38¼" (130 x 97 cm.)
Private Collection
Photo Ad Petersen



- 27 *A Soul for Sale (Ausverkauf einer Seele)*. 1958-59
Oil on canvas, 79 x 98¾" (200 x 250 cm.)
Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Cologne



28 *The Abominable Snowman*
(*L'Abominable homme de neige*). 1959
Oil on canvas, 57½ x 44⅞" (146 x 114 cm.)
Collection Oscar Schellekens
Photo Henri Kessels



- 29 *Lord of the Mountain Trolls (Dovre Gubben)*, 1959
Oil on canvas, 51 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 38 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (130 x 97 cm.)
Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne,
Centre d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris



30 *Boundless (Sans bornes)*. 1959-60
Oil on canvas, 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (46 x 55 cm.)
Private Collection
Photo Maurice Poplin



- 31 *The Atrocious Caress (La Caresse atroce)*, 1960
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Collection John Lefebvre, New York
Photo Maurice Poplin



- 32 *Rigorous Customs Inspection (Zynische Kontrolle)*. 1960
Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (60 x 80 cm.)
Private Collection
Photo Dietrich Freiherr von Werthern



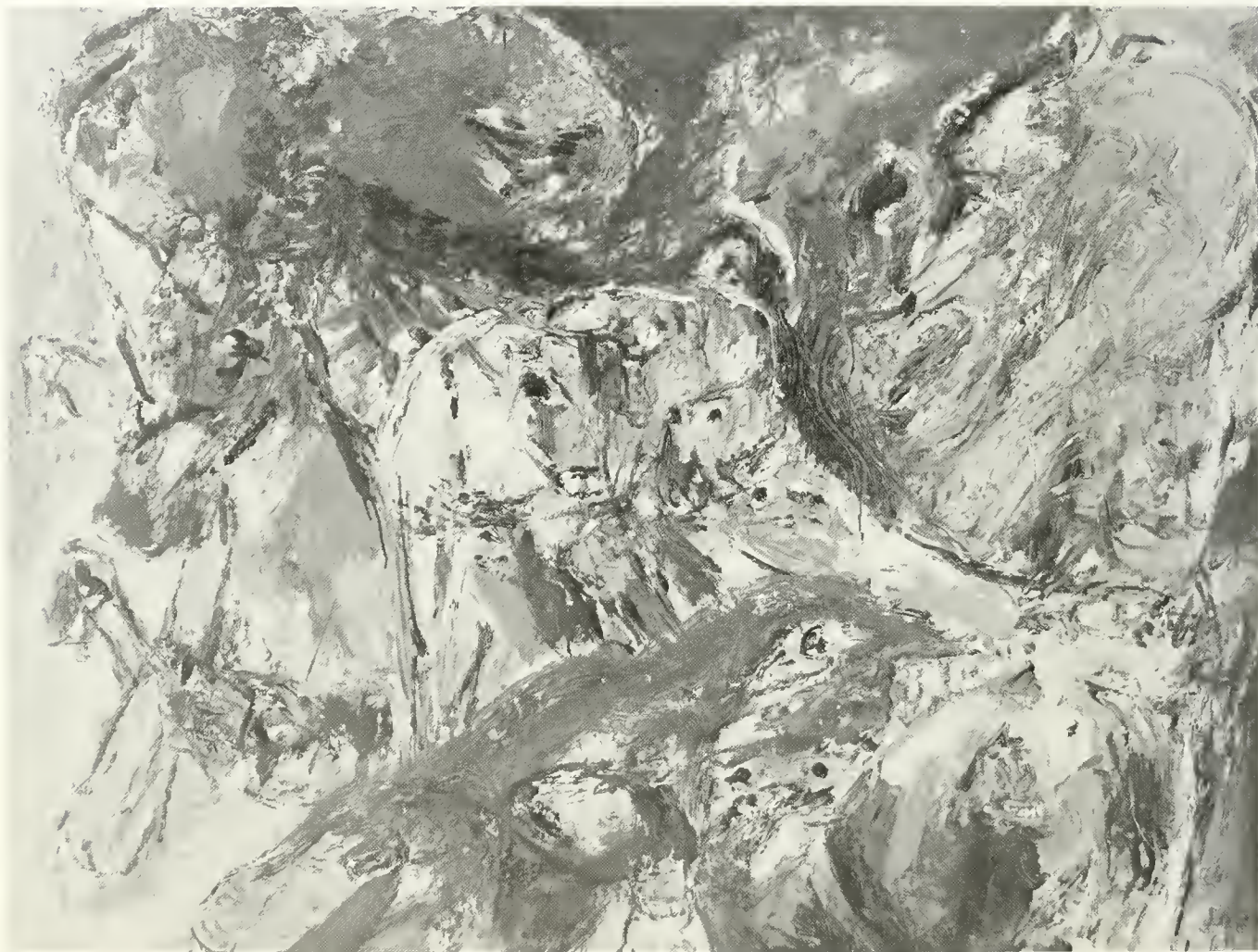
- 33 *Green Ballet (Il balletto verde)*. 1960
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Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York



- 34 *The Fierce Rose (La Rose féroce)*. 1961
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Collection Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague
Photo Maurice Poplin



- 35 *Untitled*, 1961
Oil on canvas, 38 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 52" (98 x 132 cm.)
Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo,
Gift of Seymour H. Knox, 1962
Photo Sherwin Greenberg Studio



36 *Untitled*. 1961
Oil on canvas, 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (97 x 130 cm.)
Collection E. Zintilis, Amsterdam



- 37 *I'm Brownd Off with the Sun (Le Soleil m'emmerde)*. 1961
Oil on canvas, 78¾ x 51¼" (162 x 130 cm.)
Collection Jean Pollak, Paris



38 *Poor Poet (Pauvre poète)*. 1962
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (81 x 65 cm.)
Collection The Museum of Art,
Fort Lauderdale, Florida



- 39 *The Lord President of the Beer Festival*
(*Herr Wiesenpräsident von Edelstoff*). 1962
Oil on canvas, 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (48 x 42 cm.)
Lent by Galerie van de Loo, Munich



40 *The Living Souls (De levende sjale)*. 1963
Oil on canvas, 59 x 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (150 x 100 cm.)
Private Collection



- 41 *The Rotten Year (Das Böse Jahr)*, 1963
Oil on canvas, 57½ x 44⅞" (146 x 114 cm.)
Collection Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus,
Munich
Photo Dietrich Freiherr von Werthern



- 42 *On the Unknown Shore (Am unbekannten Ufer)*. 1963
Oil on canvas, 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (97 x 130 cm.)
Collection Otto van de Loo, Munich



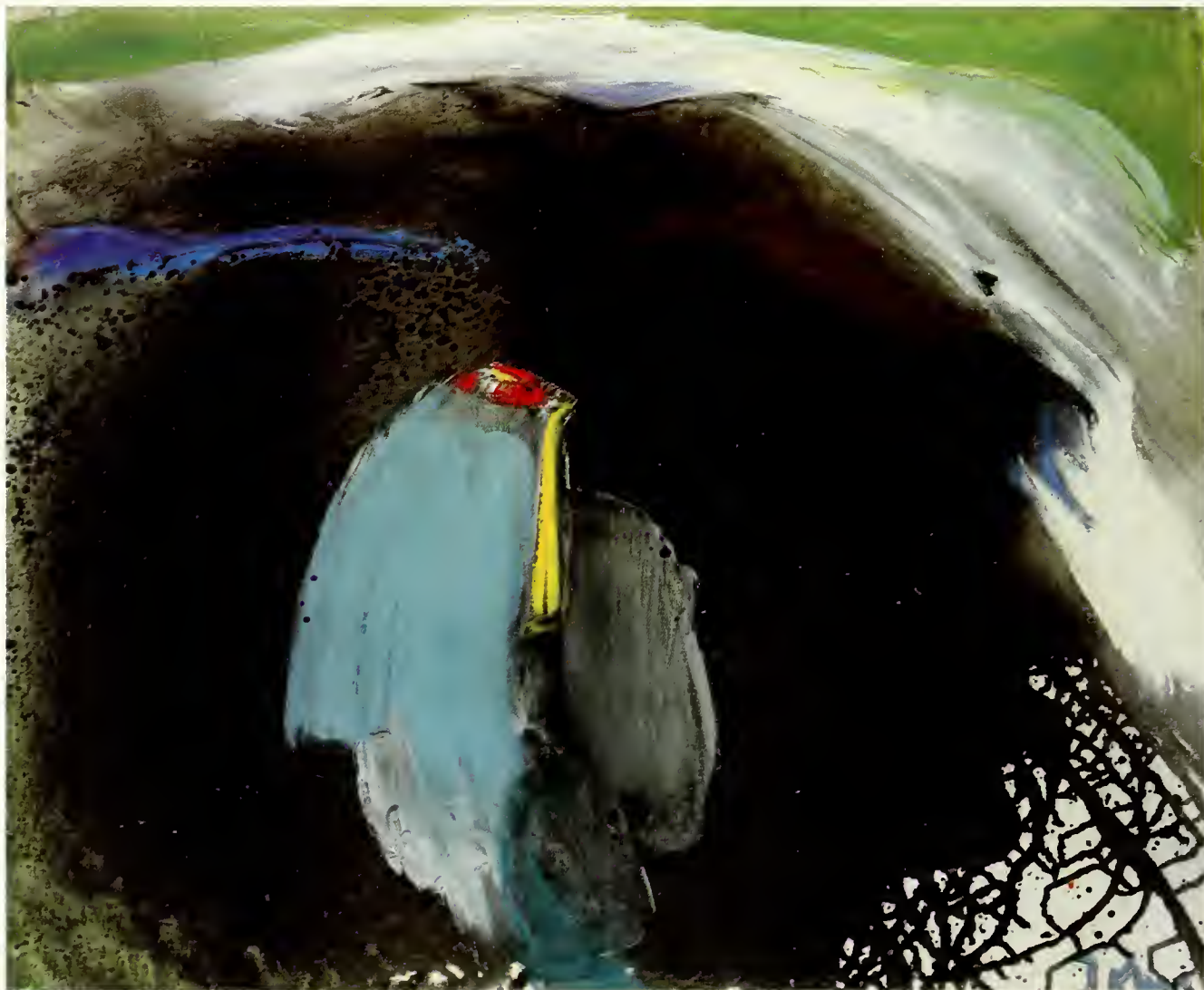
- 43 *In the Wingbeat of the Swans*
(*Im Flügelschlag der Schwäne*), 1963
Oil on canvas, 78¾ x 118¾" (199.7 x 301 cm.)
Collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Photo Dietrich Freiherr von Werthern



44 *In the Beginning Was the Image*
(*Au Commencement était l'image*). 1965
Oil on canvas, 79 x 118½" (200 x 300 cm.)
Collection Halvor N. Astrup
Photo Galleri Haaken



- 45 *Stand It.* 1966
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Collection Mrs. Phoebe Atkins, London



46 *One Hundred Faults (Cent défauts)*. 1967
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Private Collection



- 47 *Beloved Creatures in the Night*
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Collection H. R. Astrup, Oslo



48 *Me and There (Çà et moi)*. 1969
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Collection Giuglielmo Spotorno, Milan



- 49 *The Joy of Life (La Joie d'être)*, 1969
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (81 x 100 cm.)
Collection Van Stuijvenberg, Caracas



50 *Inept Horsemanship (Manège mal à l'aise)*. 1969
Oil on canvas, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (100 x 81 cm.)
Private Collection



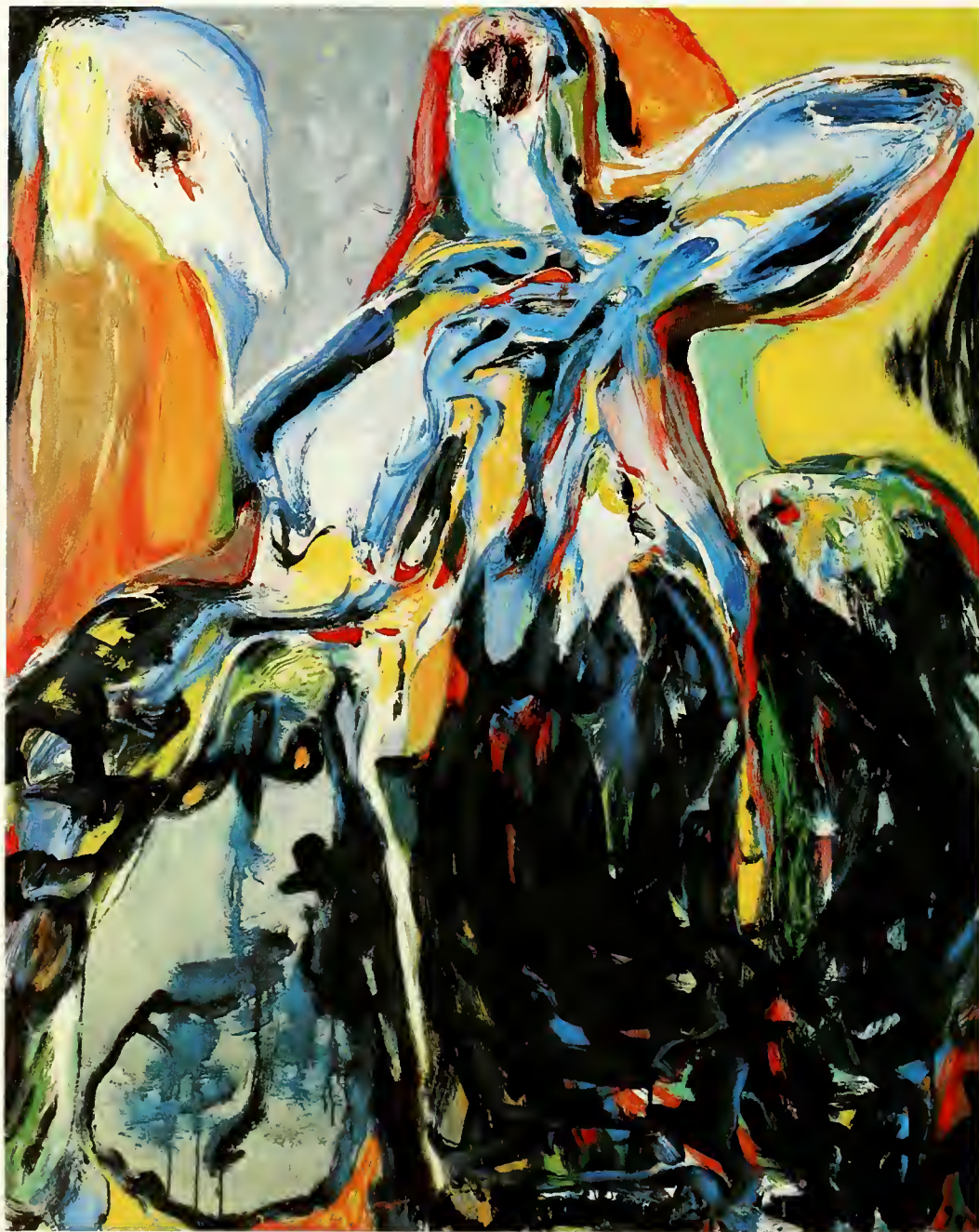
- 51 *Supply and Demand (L'Offre et la demande)*, 1969
Oil on canvas, 51¼ x 38¼" (130 x 97 cm.)
Collection E. Roemaet



- 52 *The Lucid Luxury of Hyperaestheticism*
(*La Luxure lucide de l'hyperesthésie*). 1970
Oil on canvas, 63¾ x 51¼" (162 x 130 cm.)
Collection Inger and Andreas L. Riis,
Trondheim



- 53 *The Enigma of Frozen Water*
(*L'Enigme de l'eau glacée*). 1970
Oil on canvas, 63¾ x 51¼" (162 x 130 cm.)
Collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Photo Luc Joubert



- 54 *The Wind Bears Us Away (Le Vent nous emporte)*. 1970
Oil on canvas, 51¼ x 76¾" (130 x 195 cm.)
Lent by Galerie van de Loo, Munich
Photo Luc Joubert



- 55 *Tilted Unreason (L'Irrationnel incliné)*. 1970
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 25 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (81 x 65 cm.)
Collection Nicholas Tooth, London



- 56 *The Old Island and the Sea (La Vieille île et la mer)*. 1970
Oil on canvas, 28¾ x 36¼" (73 x 92 cm.)
Private Collection



- 57 *Plaintive Plantation (Jardin des plaintes)*. 1970
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (81 x 100 cm.)
Private Collection



58 *Fragile Brotherhood (Fraternité fragile)*. 1970
Oil on canvas, 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (81 x 65 cm.)
Collection Giuglielmo Spotorno, Milan
Photo FotoMolino



- 59 *Written in Sand: Alpona (Skrevet i Sand: Alpona)*. 1971
Oil on canvas, 64 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (163 x 130 cm.)
Lent by Galeri Haaken, Oslo
Photo O. Væring



60 *Ageless (Hors d'âge)*. 1972
Oil on canvas, 51¼ x 63¾" (130 x 162 cm.)
Collection Marion Lefebvre Burge, New York



The Asger Jorn Foundation

The Foundation was set up in 1974 with offices in Norway, Denmark and England. An international council of nine members has acted as an advisory panel. The first task was to ensure the continuation of the oeuvre catalogue of Jorn's paintings, of which only Volume 1 had appeared at the time of the artist's death. Volumes 2 and 3 have now duly completed the series.

Main functions

The Foundation has been responsible for scrutinising works of art attributed to Jorn, with a view to authentication or rejection. The Foundation keeps a record of those works by Jorn which have come to light since the publication of the oeuvre catalogue.

Projects sponsored during the past eight years have included:

- 1. Assistance in the making of a 16 mm film on Jorn by Per Kirkeby, the Danish artist and film director.*
- 2. The issue of an interest-free loan to the Silkeborg Museum of Art for the purchase of a major painting by Jorn entitled Priest on the Beach from 1957-59; and the gift of a Seasons painting from 1941-42 to mark the opening of the new museum building in 1982.*
- 3. The financing of stipends and travel grants to various persons working on topics related to Jorn, e.g. Jorn's writings (Anneli Fuchs, Denmark); the COBRA movement (Anne Williamson, U.S.A.); Danish art from 1931-51 (Peter Shield, England); Jorn in Italy (Ursula Lehmann-Brockhaus, Rome).*

Future plans include the re-issue by subscription of the first volume of the oeuvre catalogue entitled Jorn in Scandinavia which has long been out of print. Anyone wishing to subscribe for a copy of this book should write for information to the Silkeborg Kunstmuseum, Box 34, 8600 Silkeborg, Denmark.

Financial

The Foundation's main source of income has been the sale of the Pour Jorn album of lithographs donated by 14 artists who were closely associated with Jorn. Since then other artist friends have made similar gifts.

The committee has plans for the future which will require additional funding. Individual donations would therefore be most welcome and should be addressed to The Asger Jorn Foundation (a/c no. 21-01-30), Kjobenhavns Handelsbank, Holmen's Kanal 2, Copenhagen K., Denmark.

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Sleeping Beauty—Art Now
Scandinavia Today

Sleeping Beauty – Art Now

The Book of Sleeping Beauty

Title given to the chief early work of author
Carl Jonas Love Almquist, born 1793 in Stockholm,
lived 1851–1865 in USA, died 1866 in Bremen.

*“Everything I do is completely original—I made
it up when I was a little kid.”*

Claes Oldenburg, who made the cover for this
catalogue, *Hanging parts of Scandinavia*, American
artist, born in Stockholm in 1929, lived in Oslo
from 1933–1937 and is now living in New York.

Sleeping Beauty – Art Now

Scandinavia Today

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

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Exhibition 82/6

4000 copies of this catalogue have been designed by Lennart Landin and printed and typeset by Bohuslänningens Boktryckeri AB, Uddevalla, Sweden

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Sponsor's Statement

Artists of the mid-twentieth century, living as they do in a period of widely ranging cultural influences and widely fluctuating socio-economic patterns, have turned to new techniques and materials in their search for artistic identity. Scandinavian artists have responded to societal changes in an intensely individualistic way that accepts the positive values of this global input without rejecting the rich history and folklore of their own countries.

The freedom with which they use the great flood of available new information while continuing to live within their tradition seems to us to be particularly appropriate and valuable today.

It is therefore a great pleasure for us to be able to contribute to the realization of the *Sleeping Beauty–Art Now* exhibition, which focuses on the work of a number of young Scandinavian artists, each of whom in a unique and personal style has told us something new about who we are and what possibilities are open to us.

Pehr G. Gyllenhammar

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Acknowledgments

The following expressions of gratitude are made in my own behalf and in that of my co-commissioner Pontus Hultén.

Our grateful acknowledgment is due first to Björn Springfeldt, Senior Curator of the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, who acted as Nordic coordinator of the exhibition and also edited the catalogue.

It would not have been possible to arrange this exhibition, *Sleeping Beauty—Art Now*, without the generosity extended by a number of artists and museum representatives both in Scandinavia and in other countries. To all these we offer our deep appreciation.

We would like to acknowledge the fact that the Nordic Council of Ministers provided the funding for the preparation of the exhibition. The work of various individuals and institutions in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States was coordinated by the Secretariat for Nordic Cultural Cooperation with efficiency and diplomacy. In an enterprise of this magnitude, bringing together artists and cultural institutions in six countries, there is always a risk that the artistic content of a project will be diminished.

However, under the guidance of Carl Tomas Edam, Secretary General of SCANDINAVIA TODAY at the Secretariat for Nordic Cultural Cooperation, it has been possible to solve all major problems in this regard and consequently foster the interest of the artists and their works. To him and his staff of Bente Noyons and Birgitta Schreiber we owe a great debt.

We are grateful to Mrs. Birgitta Lönnell, Press Attaché, Swedish Information Service, New York, for all her help. Øystein Hjort accepted the difficult task of outlining the artist's social and economical situation in Scandinavia for which we owe him great debt. Åke Larsson undertook the coordination of all transportations and solved all problems involved in a way we are most grateful for.

Sincere thanks are extended to Louise Averill Svendsen, Senior Curator of the Guggenheim Museum, for her central contribution as Coordinator of the exhibitions Asger Jorn, Öyvind Fahlström and *Sleeping Beauty—Art Now* in the presentation of Scandinavia Today at the Guggenheim.

The efforts of virtually every department of the Guggenheim Museum were involved in this project, and the dedication and skill of staff members are therefore gratefully recognized. Our appreciation is also extended to the lenders, both private individuals and public institutions, whose willingness to part with their possessions is greatly appreciated. Except for those who wish to remain anonymous, lenders are cited on the preceding page.

Our hearty thanks go to Lennart Landin in Uddevalla, Sweden, for masterly designing the catalogue. Our gratitude also goes to Claes Oldenburg for his willingness in rendering Scandinavia for the cover of this publication.

The organization of SCANDINAVIA TODAY on the American side could not have been accomplished without the administrative framework and willing support of The American-Scandinavian Foundation. Individual as well as collective encouragement for the

program came from museum directors, curators, administrators and technical support staff who lent their expertise, experience and enthusiasm.

We would be at fault, however, if particular recognition were not given to those responsible for the entire SCANDINAVIA TODAY program: to Patricia McFate, President of The American-Scandinavian Foundation, who secured funding and set program policy in the United States; to Brooke Lappin, who guided and directed the SCANDINAVIA TODAY program; to Bruce Kellerhouse, who coordinated all of the program activities; and to Albina De Meio, who undertook liaison work between the Nordic side and all participating American museums. Without the support and talents of these highly skilled professionals, the SCANDINAVIA TODAY program could not have evolved.

The exhibition *Sleeping Beauty—Art Now* will, after it's showing in New York, go to Philadelphia and to Los Angeles. We want to extend our gratitude to Mr. Ronald L. Barber, Director of Port of History Museum, Penn's Landing, Philadelphia and to Mrs. Josine Ianco-Starrels, Director of the Municipal Art Gallery in Los Angeles. We thank them for their interest, help and cooperation.

Thomas M. Messer

Director

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Little History & Explanation

Pontus Hultén

“All national art is bad, all good art is national.”

Christian Krohg (1852–1925)
Norwegian painter

“Our geography, we cannot change.”

J. K. Paasikivi (1870–1956)
Finnish statesman

“Only Sweden has Swedish gooseberries.”

Carl Jonas Love Almquist (1793–1866)
Swedish author

“I have loved the Danish language as Adam loved Eve. There was no other woman.”

Sören Kierkegaard (1813–1855)
Danish philosopher

“‘Am I to go in with this soup?’ say I. ‘Yes, for Heaven’s sake,’” replies the cook, who is hard of hearing, and one of the greatest sinners of our age; she has hung a colored picture of the Savior above the steel sink.

Halldór Kiljan Laxness (1902–)
Icelandic author

The reason why the Scandinavian countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden—are grouped together is that they are all situated in one corner of Europe, and they are all small in terms of population. Their modern history is, however, not parallel at all. And one can question if their contemporary culture is very coherent. Four countries speak more or less similar languages of Germanic root, but the Finns speak a totally different language which is not Indo-European in origin.

With some effort, one can, however, establish a list of common elements and factors in their respective cultures of today, most of them related to the light, the climate, in some cases a common ethnic origin and older cultural links, going more or less far back into history. On the other hand, although Danes and Swedes have not been separated into two distinct countries for more than about a thousand years, and Swedes and Norwegians less than one hundred years, there is in many cases no difficulty in distinguishing a Dane, an Icelander, a Norwegian and a Swede by facial expressions, movement patterns, and their general behavior before they have opened their mouths. The Finns often look very different from, for example, the Swedes, although they can be as blonde, even blonder than the Scandinavians of northern European, Germanic, Indo-European origin.

For somebody looking at the Scandinavians from the outside, it is, however, probably easier to see how they are alike. For us, it is more interesting to contemplate how we are

different. We come from very different situations in terms of modern history. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Danes, a rich and rather well established and even, in part, rather bourgeois nation was trying to sort out its complicated relations with the Germans, their southern neighbors, who for a long time had had a strong economic and cultural influence. Norway, which had been a poor part of Denmark, was now a kingdom, but sharing its king with Sweden. It started to develop its national characteristics and very quickly produced a magnificent literature with Ibsen, Bjornsson and later, at the end of the century, Hamsun, and great painters like Krohg and Munch. Iceland was one of the poorest parts of Europe, economically and even culturally plundered by the Danes and Norwegians. Sweden was slowly emerging from a long series of military and political catastrophies in the nineteenth century. It was a rather poor country at this time, culturally more influenced by France and England than by Germany. It had not developed a bourgeois culture of the central European type and never would. Finland, a part of Sweden for at least a thousand years, had been lost to Russia in the Napoleonic wars. Finland had a very special and somewhat privileged role amongst the Russian provinces. The Finns would be important in the background of the extraordinary explosion of cultural vitality that took place in St. Petersburg at the turn of the century.

In the beginning of this century, a number of changes occurred that led to the establishment of the present national situation. Norway separated itself from Sweden and became an independent kingdom. Finland, as a result of the February and October revolutions in 1917, became first a kingdom and then a republic, after a civil war that would mark its future for a long time. Only Iceland remained a dependent part of Denmark, and became a republic at the end of the Second World War. Denmark, Norway and Sweden remained neutral in the First World War, and this contributed to the isolation that results from the geographical situation (it became a dead end part of Europe when the Soviets more or less closed their border after the end of the civil war following the October revolution).

The time between the wars was a relatively dull period culturally speaking. The Second World War reserves a fate that would for a long time separate the Scandinavian countries. Finland was attacked by the Soviet Union in two succeeding wars of great violence. It managed to survive (whereas, for example, the Baltic states were absorbed by the Soviet Union). Finland lost one third of its territory, and 85,000 dead. Denmark and Norway were occupied by the Nazis and developed important resistance movements, but were liberated only late in the war. Iceland was occupied first by the British and from 1941 it was governed by the U.S., who after "negotiation" took over the role of the British. Only Sweden remained neutral, perhaps mainly due to its geographical situation. This lead to a greater isolation for Sweden that could be felt for a long time, perhaps even today, more than a generation after the end of the war.

The present cultural conditions have developed from the situation between the two World Wars. A very quick and, of course, extremely sketchy survey of that situation gives the following picture: In Iceland, one artist, Johannes Kjarval, 1885–1972, dominated the local scene in terms of creative action, which, generally speaking, was very quiet. The main writer, Halldór Laxness, had left Iceland to live in France and Italy. In Norway, a group of important artists, most of whom had lived in Paris for some years, came back to Oslo in the thirties, where they established themselves in the tradition of the artist-hero, modelling themselves after such examples as Munch or rather Vigeland (and the great Mexicans such as Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros). Their theories about society and art were slightly socialist or Marxist (as in Mexico) in a typical thirties way, and their aspiration was to cover the maximum number of walls in public buildings with their art. They dominated the

Norwegian art scene totally and managed to maintain their supremacy well into the fifties and early sixties. It could perhaps be said that Norwegian art is still suffering from the fact that one generation thus was allowed to sit at the fleshpots, more or less undisturbed, for such a long time.

In Denmark the situation was totally different. The contact with Paris and the Bauhaus was more lively. A group of very young artists, some of whom would become very important after the war, had made a breakthrough and already established themselves before 1939, when some of them were only about twenty years old (Linien). Their idols were artists like Kandinsky and Klee, as well as Mondrian and the great Russians. Their vital avant-garde spirit survived the war years—some of these artists played a role in the Danish resistance movement—and immediately after 1945 they renewed their international contacts, and two of the most important—Robert Jacobsen and Richard Mortensen—moved to Paris, where they stayed for many years. Parallel to this movement that was resolutely oriented towards abstract art and the avant-garde, at least in its second phase, was the COBRA group (COBRA—Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam) whose prime mover was the Danish artist Asger Jorn. Jorn would also move to Paris but would spend long periods of his time in Denmark and Sweden. A rich and complicated national—international situation resulted, its richness still felt today, although a certain mannerism, typical for some Scandinavian cultural environments, has been creeping in.

In Sweden, the thirties was a rather bleak period. The decade had started with an artistic catastrophe. For the World's Fair held in Stockholm in 1930, which became the great introduction to "functionalist" architecture in the Nordic countries, the Swedish artist Otto G. Carlsund had brought together a great exhibition of works by Mondrian, Vantongerloo, Léger, Héliou, etc. It was received by the press and public in the most fearful manner. Carlsund had a breakdown, the works were dispersed, and some have not yet, even today, been recovered. From the beginning of the decade an artist cooperative called "Color and Form," representing a romantic, sometimes expressionistic naturalism of a rather nationalistic (or provincial) kind, also more or less totally dominated the market. After the immediate postwar period, some younger artists started to show rather timid non-figurative work based on formal ideas coming from the Bauhaus vocabulary and inspired by the play of positive—negative forms in the *Guernica* structure. It would take until the early sixties for Sweden to recover from the isolation it had been forced into by the war and the "neutrality."

In Finland, again, the picture was different. In the thirties, a certain landscape tradition of quality, but difficult to understand or appreciate when seen from the outside, prevailed. After the war it took, for obvious reasons, some time for Finnish culture to reestablish itself. As soon as the young artists could travel, many of them turned towards Italy, rather than to France, as is the Finnish tradition.

The present situation in the artistic life of the Scandinavian countries today and something about the artists showing works in this exhibition, and why they were asked to participate.

There is no overall pattern common to the situation of the pictorial arts in the five Scandinavian countries today. As has been said, the historical background is very diversified, and the flood and tide in the art life does not run with the same moon. However, when the proposition of the present exhibition was discussed, it seemed necessary to look

upon the art produced in Scandinavia as from one country, and the works to be shown would have to be chosen so that the whole would give a total picture of a very diversified situation. It would, at the same time, have to make a coherent and beautiful exhibition, true to the richness and complexity of the art life in Scandinavia. The magnitude of the difficulties in putting such an exhibition together can be appreciated by those who have tried something similar. (The effect on friendship and good relations is disastrous, it seems that in the end, everybody hates you, for one reason or another.) It is important to know that the selection (of two artists from each of the five countries) is *not* the result of an evaluation of the art in each country but is based on concern for the public's experience of the exhibition as a whole and on the general image this whole can give of art in Scandinavia today. It is obvious that the result will not satisfy anybody.

The art in the different countries will be discussed in alphabetical order as follows:

In the kingdom of Denmark, the present situation in the field of art is quite lively. It seemed that two well-established artists, now in their forties, are best suited for this particular exhibition: Per Kirkeby and Bjorn Norgaard. Both have already gone through a long series of different experiences, which seems rather typical for the younger Scandinavian artists. Kirkeby started as a scientist, in geology, lived in Greenland for some time, but has been active mainly as an artist for a long time. His art has changed considerably during this period. His art has, however, remained related to his experience as a geologist, but in a rather secret way. Generally speaking, his paintings take a long time to reveal their content. They belong to a kind of expressionism (often related to Germany) that is now very much in fashion. Kirkeby has been doing this kind of painting for a very long time—actually, it is the kind of painting he did at the beginning of his career.

Kirkeby's paintings have a background in a long tradition of lyrical-romantic landscape painting in Denmark, to which Emil Nolde also belonged. (Nolde was born at the Danish-German border.) On this occasion, it could be said that it is axiomatic that the less known art from peripheral countries always imitates the better known art from the center. It is of no importance if dates and documents presented prove the contrary. Even the attempt to prove the contrary is regarded as regional busybodiness or, in the best of cases, as touching wishful thinking.

Bjorn Norgaard's origin as an artist belongs in the Nordic-German-Fluxus-happenings fetishist trend of the sixties. It should be mentioned that both Kirkeby and Norgaard as very young artists contributed to the artistic energy that brought Joseph Beuys to Copenhagen and that the resulting collaboration was very close and of vital importance for all parties involved. Norgaard has made some very striking and beautiful happenings, his art is strongly related to performance and his sculptures are theatrical in the best sense of the word, meaning they contain important tension between formal structure and their compressed content.

In Finland, art is traditionally very diversified, moving in many parallel directions. The artists are quite independent and may therefore be oriented towards various international sources, maintaining contacts with the art of The United States, France, Italy, etc. at once. Two somewhat but not altogether contrasting attitudes can be seen in Finland even more clearly than in the other countries: the fascination with the autochthonous and the craving to participate in the art-life of the world, to break their isolation. The two Finns in the exhibition clearly represent these non-conflicting alternative attitudes. Olli Lyytikäinen, a most original artist, sometimes, it seems, reaches back into the magic world of the very little-known Finnish symbolist period at the beginning of the century, the years of the older Saarinen, Hugo Simberg, Axel Gallen-Kallela and the young Sibelius, years when the

great master Vroubel was teaching at the Academy of the neighboring St. Petersburg. Many of Lyytikäinen's works evoke the mysteriously evasive, bittersweet and deeper tragic character of the Finnish landscape as reflected and imprinted in the hearts of its inhabitants. The inhabitants answer to the impact of their landscape in a fierce but deeply hidden humor.

Paul Osipow's paintings are directly sensual; they declare the beauty of color in a most straightforward way. Whereas they use a reference system that is easily recognizable, their presence is their own and very distinct. They are far from naive, or rather they have the naïveté of a long evolution, well-resolved and clarified into evidence.

Leading Icelandic artists have often chosen to live in the center of Europe (at least for part of the time). Some have become so integrated in the art life of other cities that they are not always recognized as Icelandic, as is the case with the painter Erro, now living in Paris and Bangkok. An extremely creative group of conceptual Icelandic artists, some of whom are relatives, have now lived in Amsterdam for several years. Their art is certainly quite international in some of its aspects, but the precision, the sparseness of means of expression and the drastic humor of the ancestors is often present.

Using somewhat similar means of expression (often photography) the two Icelandic artists are quite different in their attitudes and the content of their work is widely divergent. Hreinn Fridfinnsson's works are often concerned with time and the essence of time. It is a visual poetry; a situation is created to enhance a mystery. There is never any explaining, never a going back. He has said that he is "painting with nature."

Gudmundsson uses the photo image as a vehicle for a giddy departure into a land of weightless, timeless and hilarious adventures where the humorous statement occurs only at the beginning of the trip. The visual beauty of the photo is, so to speak, the ticket. Gudmundsson has said: "I work with an idea like a sculptor with stone."

As has been mentioned, Norway was dominated by the art of the thirties well into the fifties, remaining in, even boasting about, an independent national situation, uninfluenced by "international," "cosmopolitical" art. In recent years, some younger artists have freed themselves from the combined domination of older generations and tyrannical corporatistic artists' unions (which are strongly present in all the Scandinavian countries). A new situation is developing, as in many other fields of contemporary culture. (Norwegian popular music is at its peak and contributing strongly to the international scene.) The two Norwegian artists in the exhibition represent widely different aspects of the present Scandinavian situation. Breivik's sculpture combines elements from the tradition of conceptual form, such as, for example, Brancusi's highly simplified heads, elements from folk art, perfection in utilitarian objects, and even the mysterious perversion of the handmade object that looks like a machine element. Breivik's sculptures often appear in series where the different sculptures develop and support each other in an almost cinematographic behavior, and in that way achieve a theatrical dimension.

Pettersen pursues in his painting the Norwegian fascination with the heritage of Munch and Krohg and the painters of the thirties, but he does it in a overheated, love-hate atmosphere where he only sometimes manages to get some distance and put his tongue in his cheek. He is attacking what he calls "the Norwegian variation of French late Impressionism" with an emotional engagement and an intellectual frenzy that contains a lot of irony. His version of "the return to painting" of the last years is proceeding on a tangential course and he is sailing in hard wind.

Swedish art life today is slowly getting out of the stalemate and the desert of the iconoclastic discussions, and the puritanism that appeared in the aftermath of 1968, when

cheap moralism and political activism for some time poisoned the country. The critical considerations of the early sixties had turned into a boy-scoutish tutelage for "the masses," if not into crutches for fools. The present situation is quite rich and diversified. The two Swedish artists in this exhibition—Lars Englund and Olle Kåks—have been present and showing their works for a long time. Englund has for many years been dealing with a purified space description and interpretation starting with artificial form, but has in the last decade come closer to nature's ways of building. This inspiration comes in part also from science, in, for example, his "mapping" of topological properties. He also runs parallel research in architecture and sound.

Olle Kåks showed early work at an important exhibition at the beginning of the evolution of conceptual art *Op losse schroeven* at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1969. In the same way as some of the Finnish artists, he is now very close to an interpretation of nature in a new and personal kind of mood, not clearly representational but rather conceptual and highly subjective, related to the northern Swedish folk culture and landscape from which he comes. He has always been aware of the limiting tyranny of style and been able to stay free to apply his extensive knowledge of art history, paraphrasing, joking, borrowing, fooling around

Scandinavia: a kind of northern Balkan; little-known, neglected, misunderstood, often simplified in modern journalistic presentations into the silly, suffering since 1918 from its dead-end geographical situation that has come as a result of the Soviet Union's reluctance to open its borders or rather, its will for isolation. A wonderful part of the world; rich, modest, mysterious, difficult, partly untouched by modern international culture, still maintaining its own cultures, thousands of years old. Full of lakes, forests, lonely islands all of polished granite, winds, silence, darkness of the winters, the white nights of the summers, far between the farms, unpretentious, timid. A demonstration of the possible.

Making art. Making a living

The artist's role in Scandinavia

Øystein Hjort

The Danish government recently said no to Nordsat, a Nordic TV satellite. The project was supposed to strengthen cultural unity in the Nordic countries—or Scandinavia, as they are collectively best known in English—by promoting interest in and knowledge of one another's countries, and by making it easier to understand one another's languages. This is only one of many examples of how difficult it is to make cultural cooperation work in Scandinavia. There are things we can agree on, but at least as many which we cannot reduce to their Scandinavian common denominators.

Cultural cooperation, which is extensive, as we shouldn't forget, has naturally emerged from the recognition that the Nordic countries together take up a corner of Europe which shares certain special conditions, a common cultural heritage.

But it can be difficult to see a common heritage. Differences among the countries are marked. It stands to reason that Finland occupies a cultural and geographical position which makes a national cultural identity necessary. And it is equally obvious that Denmark has become somewhat estranged from the rest of Scandinavia as far as special interests and potentials go, since it joined the European Communities in 1972.

Denmark's Minister of Cultural Affairs recently noted that because of this, and due to its geographical position, Denmark must be seen as "a border area between Scandinavia and the rest of Europe." Denmark is thus a cultural buffer state which has opened its borders to Common Market culture, but at the same time must defend its Danish cultural identity in as much as it is also part of the Scandinavian entity.

But what is a national cultural identity today, when the western world is on its way toward a "monoculture," with an increasingly small difference between center and periphery, among other things because of what one writer calls "the collapse of the time dimension" when it comes to the mediation of trends and ideas?¹ Outside observers raise this question again and again. It was a reasonable point of departure for J. Boulton Smith, when he attempted to isolate the special features of modern Finnish painting in what is now unfortunately an outdated introduction to the subject. "... To what extent has modern Finnish painting an individual cultural identity? Have the best artists in this study owed much to a particularly Finnish artistic tradition, or have they simply been painters of exceptional individual talent who happened to be born in Finland?"² J. Boulton Smith opts for a strong Finnish character.

The question he poses is the same one that comes up every time a small cultural area is seen from a larger one. We can go to a completely different latitude and once again find the problem in South America, where the Colombian critic Marta Traba, for example, has taken this view: "I do not believe in 'Colombian art' but in an art which comes from Colombia. The difference between the two is quite obvious. If we say 'Colombian art,' we are implying the common denominator of a group of works and admitting that they are linked with one another by special esthetic characteristics, by 'Colombian' characteristics. Yet we know quite well that such characteristics do not exist, nor can they be enunciated in any way."³

1. H. I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (White Plains, N.Y., 1976), p. 15.

2. J. Boulton Smith, *Modern Finnish Painting and Graphic Art* (New York, 1970), p. 7.

3. Quoted from J. Franco, *The Modern Culture of Latin America. Society and the Artist* (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 220 ff.

The ten artists in this exhibition do not give us examples of Scandinavian art, but of different forms of art which have manifested themselves in Scandinavia in recent years. Is this how it really is? There is, after all, also art which in different ways is conditioned by certain basic national circumstances. So we can say that Olli Lyytikäinen's work has roots in the fantastic Finnish narrative tradition, or that Bård Breivik's feeling for materials has a similar background in the admirable Norwegian handicraft tradition. At the same time, these elements have long since entered into a symbiotic relationship with certain features in the development of modernism.

Tradition does play a role, and it should. But for avant-garde art, it is considered throughout Scandinavia as very dominating and onerous. It is grappling with tradition in an attempt to transcend it which creates the true "tension zone" in this art from Scandinavia—or Scandinavian art! The Norwegian painter Christian Krohg (1852–1925) supposedly said: "All national art is bad, all good art is national." It is interesting that the view was also voiced by the Danish painter Harald Giersing (1881–1927), who expressed it this way: "All good art is national, not all national art is good." The quotation is just as famous in Danish art history as it is in Norwegian, and Giersing's version was one to which Asger Jorn (1914–1973), characteristically enough, often returned.

For many years, Jorn worked on an enormous documentation, in 28 volumes, of *10,000 Years of Scandinavian Folk Art* (only one preliminary volume of which was finished). There was "a Scandinavian vision of art" which the international artist Jorn wholeheartedly acknowledged. And he believed (in the middle of the 1960s) that a new age was about to begin, when "a dawning understanding will prevail that our place in world culture is not identical with what we accept from abroad, but with what we ourselves are able to produce, whether this is large or small, a recognition that we intellectually possess only what we give away."⁴

Tradition plays a role, and not just up to Jorn, but even farther. Both of the Danish participants in this exhibition, Per Kirkeby and Bjørn Nørgaard, have numerous references in Danish art history, and both, at some time or other, have passed the Danish neoclassic sculptor Thorvaldsen.

The role played by tradition for young Scandinavian artists today (and along with it, the traditional attitude in the milieu toward which they must take a stand) is perhaps best summarized in statements made by two other participants in the exhibition. Paul Osipow: "I believe it is better to experience opposition than it is to meet with indifference." And Arvid Pettersen: "Tradition has haunted Norwegian art. It has remained more of a straightjacket than a source on which to draw. It has come to mean constraint, but it is your duty to derive the most from it and bring something else back to it instead. In other words, it is a question of a process which revitalizes tradition."

The official picture

What links the Scandinavian countries together from another aspect is a largely common concept of cultural policy. There is an extended view of culture: as many people as possible should have access to art, and artists should be supported as well as possible under given (economic) conditions. Gradually, the artist's role has been afforded increasing respect and understanding, and this can be seen in the extent of the state subsidy systems which aim at giving artists orderly and secure conditions under which to do their creative work. The Norwegian national budget for 1982 on a whole follows the zero growth principle, but nonetheless includes a twenty percent increase over the previous year for the cultural

4. From his "preliminary description of the outline and plan for the publication of the work *10,000 Years of Scandinavian Folk Art*," n.d.

sector. The higher priority placed on culture is not as clear in the other countries, but good will is there. The problem is that good will is often ineffective. And good will simply doesn't extend as far as experimental art.

A leading Finnish civil servant recently told me that artists' social standing is higher than their income: people value their artists. But in spite of a major effort on the part of politicians, subsidy systems have not been able to keep up with inflation and the general rise in expenditures. Creative artists, above all, have become pauperized as a result. This has been realized in all of Scandinavia, and it underlies all efforts to create reasonable economic conditions for artists. Artists represent a low-wage occupation, a state of affairs not at all in keeping with their importance for national culture.

It is difficult to understand cultural life in Scandinavia without some insight into the relationship between artist and society in this respect. For an American observer, a number of features of the established subsidy systems must seem almost exotic (if we can use the word "exotic" in this connection!). But it must be stressed that we have different, and stricter, tax regulations. Scandinavia does not have the same firm foundation of interested collectors, and there are none of the same enticing tax deductions, which make the collector an important intermediate link between artists and museums.

The Act on the Danish State Art Foundation states by way of introduction that it has "as its global work to promote Danish creative art." Promoting creative art is also the primary goal in the other countries. At present, Norway and Sweden have worked toward it most consistently. The very extensive results we see there must be credited in no small measure to the effective trade unions, the artists' organizations.

Denmark is the only one of the five countries which has a separate ministry of cultural affairs, founded in 1961. Subordinate to it is the Danish State Art Foundation, whose various committees (which sit for three years at a time) award three-year grants especially to talented young artists, and once-only grants which can be considered production and project subsidies. The Foundation also purchases works of art for public institutions and museums, pays for art works for state buildings, and provides important subsidies for municipal and other public buildings. Finally, there are lifelong payments, testimonial gifts, to a number of creative artists who have made a significant contribution in their field.

Variations on this model form the basis for the policies of the other countries. Cultural subsidies in *Finland* are given by the National Art Council, whose members are also appointed for three years at a time. Artists' grants, for one, three and five years at a time, and project grants are taken from funds partly budgeted by the state, partly from the proceeds of the Finnish Slot Machine Association. The grants are tax-free. If artists' salaries had been adopted, they would have been taxed as normal income. There are also a number of artists' pensions.

The state also finances art schools and colleges, gives extensive support to museums, though on the regional level there is a system of joint state and municipal support.

A "provincial artist" experiment was carried out during the 1970s. Artists from various fields worked in the different provinces partly with their own creative work, partly with teaching and cultural work in a broader sense. The experiment has been important in decentralizing culture, which now plays a growing role on the local level. The results of the experiment were so favorable that a law was passed on the program in 1981.

The question of an artist's salary along the same lines as those paid in Norway and Sweden has been discussed in Finland. Proposals have been made, but the time is not yet ripe for such a system. However, several fifteenyear grants with the right to a pension have recently been awarded for the first time.

The criterion of security is an important one—above all increased social security for artists—and the proposals which have been made primarily concern creative artists, and, to a lesser extent, performing artists who hold some kind of position in theaters, orchestras, etc.

In *Iceland*, testimonial salaries are paid to a small number of artists. They are granted for one year at a time, but can in practice be considered permanent. In addition, there are two types of work grant. The smaller grant corresponds to perhaps two to three months' salary. The Federation of Icelandic Artists wants to reduce the number of such grants and at the same time increase the payments made. The other type is grants given for three to nine months.

Everyone agrees that a study should be made of grant and subsidy systems in force in the other countries, and there was an almost historic situation last year when all artists' associations in Iceland met for the first time to devise a common cultural policy.

It should also be mentioned that Iceland has a two percent rule for works of art for school buildings. Under this rule, two percent of the cost of the building should be spent on works of art for it. It has been proposed that the same rule be applied to all state buildings.

The most thoroughgoing analyses of artists' conditions, and of the state's responsibility toward artists as a profession, have been undertaken in Norway and Sweden. In many respects, *Norway* has gone farther than other countries in Scandinavia in meeting artists' demands, and the radical solutions to the problem which have been adopted can be linked with the recognition that until the seventies, Norway was far behind the other countries in cultural policy.⁵

The central points in the Norwegian subsidy system are:

- 1) a system of guaranteed incomes
- 2) the right for artists to negotiate
- 3) the development of (collective) compensation systems.

Let me quickly describe what these points entail since in many respects they represent a new way of thinking about the relationship between state and artist.

1) A system of guaranteed incomes has been in force since 1977, and covers active artists who have done high-quality work. The guaranteed income is divided into segments. The maximum sum can be paid only to those who do not have any income of their own. Applications are approved by a grants committee.

This can be difficult enough. Norway has something like 4,000 creative and performing artists with a position which qualifies them to subsidies under this system. Pictorial artists make up the largest group by far, one-quarter of the total. It should be pointed out that artists who want a guaranteed income do not have to be members of any organization.

In 1981 nearly 250 pictorial artists had a guaranteed income. This year the average payment made to this group under the system was just under 40,000 Norwegian crowns, slightly over \$5000.

2) The Norwegians recognized very soon that artists had a natural right to negotiate their economic conditions. The state took upon itself the role of the opposite party, and at the same time gave negotiating rights to the national organizations which represent the groups of artists involved. This right covers negotiations on compensation for the use of artists' work, on rules and guidelines for state grants systems and guaranteed incomes, on remuneration for commissions, etc.

The agreements which have been made are uniquely Norwegian and have not yet been implemented in the other countries.

5. There is a comprehensive description in German of the development of art policies and subsidy systems from a slightly different angle in J. Brockmann, "Zur sozialen Lage der bildende Künstler in Norwegen," *Heute Norwegen Heute*, exhibition catalogue (Kiel and Darmstadt, 1981).

3) The rationale of the compensation systems is the agreement that artists have the right to remuneration for the use of their works by the state as long as it is still the artists' property. Compensation is naturally made for all exhibitions which are organized or financed by the state. Compensation goes direct to the artist and is calculated according to fixed rates which are subject to price-index adjustment.

Another point still under discussion is what literally translates as "display compensation." This was formulated by pictorial artists who point out, among other things, that other creative artists, such as composers and authors, are paid royalties for the use of their works. Only very few pictorial artists can live from the sale of their works. This is why they want compensation—in addition to the kinds already mentioned—for the use of their work after it is sold.

But the question is problematic and has not yet been resolved. As it is, exhibition budgets are already strained. All of the institutions and authorities involved have had their budgets raised, and expenditures for exhibition compensation will henceforth be part of the normal expenses in an exhibition budget.

Since compensation is in addition calculated in proportion to the value of the work, prestigious exhibitions with prestigious artists could be an expensive business. Having work exhibited at the Venice Biennale can give a Norwegian artist an easy extra income, without him having to lift a finger. But a colleague in Iceland, who cannot enjoy the same favorable system, can risk having to pay something out of his own pocket.

The interesting thing about the Norwegian compensation systems is that they are collective and have a clear social and solidary intent. In the organizations' first negotiations with the state, their goal was to have all artists paid equally large subsidies. This solidary view has been relinquished now, and today the criterion of quality has been taken up again in evaluations. But it is also the individual artist's work and contribution which are the prerequisites for membership in the organizations.

One special feature of the situation in Norway is the artists' own important role in the mediation of art works. Through their own organization and exhibition institutions, they have contributed to the cultural decentralization which is important in a country with such difficult geographic conditions as Norway's. Artists, together with other art experts, also make up the majority in juries judging competitions for works of art for public buildings, etc. Those who are going to use the buildings are also on the jury, but they can never constitute a majority.

The state has declared its intention to use two percent of the budget of state buildings for buying works of art, but the figure has hardly been more than one percent in practice because of general economic difficulties.

The main trend is clear now, but new ideas have been put forward since Norway's change of government. The new conservative government might change the current situation somewhat, since the party has always taken a special stand in the debate over the state's responsibility toward artists. It has been against the guaranteed income system and preferred testimonial grants paid according to artistic criteria. The conservatives have criticized the guaranteed income systems for being socially oriented, without any regard for artistic quality.

There is probably the general view in the other Scandinavian countries that Norway has a strong arts policy, but that the quality of the work done there in the pictorial arts is rather poor.

In *Sweden*, there is an even stronger realization (of what must also be a problem in Norway) that there are a great many (too many?) artists. The official figure is 5000–6000

pictorial artists as opposed to some 1000 writers, for example. Around 3000 of them are members of the KRO, the Swedish Artists' National Organization. The figure naturally indicates that enormous amounts would have to be set aside in the budget if Swedish artists were to have guarantee systems and compensation similar to those of their Norwegian colleagues.

At present, there are still grants for one, two and five years in addition to about a hundred artists' grants (with pictorial artists accounting for two-thirds of them) in the form of a yearly remuneration from the state calculated according to the artist's own income.

But since the middle of the 1970s, considerable progress has been made in two areas which are perhaps the artists' most important demands of the state:

1) Exhibition compensation. As in Norway, compensation is given for works of art in exhibitions which are under the auspices of the state or receive state aid. But this has already become a problem, since museums have not received compensation in the form of increased exhibition budgets and can thus be forced to take the necessary amounts from their acquisitions accounts, for example.

There has been a discussion of whether this should hold good for all public exhibitions, so that the state paid part, while the municipalities covered the preliminary expenses. This system has never been adopted, and even though the Artists' Organization is still negotiating with the municipalities, the state has shelved the idea.

2) "Display compensation." The basic view is the same held in Norway that pictorial artists have the right to compensation for the public use (i.e. being on display and seen) of their works. Artists want to get away from what they consider public welfare—grants, etc.—and instead want remuneration for work they have done.

It has been proposed that a new Pictorial Artists' Fund be established, to which both "display compensation" and existing grants be transferred. A tax on audio tapes and video cassettes is also being levied in Sweden, which is expected to bring in 40–50 million Swedish crowns (c. \$8 million) annually. Five million crowns (c. \$834,000) of this would be transferred to the Pictorial Artists' Fund, which, with additional money from the State, would have 17–19 million crowns (c. \$3 million) at its disposal. A heated debate is now in progress over how this money would be administered. Many have proposed the Norwegian model of a guaranteed income.

State subsidies for works of art for state buildings vary from year to year. At present, the available funds amount to somewhat over 13 million Swedish crowns (\$2.2 million) per year. Subsidies are not paid as a fixed percentage, but as a lump sum. The subsidies are granted on a case-by-case basis, according to the building's function, location, etc. The individual municipalities are free to decide how much they want to spend on works of art.

Financing for works of art for state buildings is channelled through the Swedish National Arts Council. The Council is made up entirely of artists who sit for a period of three years. They administer the funds and select project leaders for the various buildings.

There is a joint council which sees to it that those who will use the buildings are given the necessary information on the projects. The council debates the often minutely formulated demands made of the artist by the party commissioning the work of art. It thus carries out important informative work, which in most cases has resulted in a fine exchange of viewpoints on art's function in its specific surroundings. This joint council has, in fact, given the lie to fears of indirect censorship. Sweden has a public participation law which has not, however, had any direct significance for pictorial art in public buildings. There have been a few examples in Sweden and Norway of the public opposing the works of art they have been given, and there is little doubt that if the democratization of the decision-

making processes regarding art in public places is carried much further, there will be a risk of tame and insignificant art, a kind of visual Muzak which pretties up public milieux and doesn't offend anyone. As it is, one can point out many important and interesting results, among them several of the decorations in Stockholm's subway stations, which are often cited in showing how well this system works.

It is tempting to make comparisons with conditions in America, where the Art in Architecture program of the seventies, at least to a Scandinavian observer, seems to have worked more openly and with less bias with a view to new art. But there is hardly any parallel in Scandinavia to the belief expressed by the program's administrator, Jay Solomon, that the government has a responsibility "to experiment, to innovate, to be a testing ground for new ideas."⁶ Opposed to this belief is that strange public participation law, a grand example of misunderstood democracy, where every view will be considered, resulting in art based on compromises and cold calculation.

There are other problems. They are Sweden's problems, but also indirectly involve the other countries: it is impossible in the eighties to live up to the cultural programs which the state and its bureaucrats established in the seventies. The economic crisis means disappointed prospects for artists' organizations. The National Council for Cultural Affairs, which in Sweden is the single authority for nearly the whole cultural field, admits that the least progress has been made in the pictorial arts. Proposals such as "display compensation" came into the picture so late as far as the Council was concerned that funds had already been earmarked or used. Pictorial artists on the whole undoubtedly are more estranged from politicians than other groups of artists. And unlike writers, they do not have a tradition of formulating their cultural policies.

One can say in summary that cultural policy is built upon highly diffuse artistic criteria. It is, above all, social policy, with social security as its underlying rationale. Artists want the same social and economic security as the rest of society. The danger is that organizational politics will overshadow other considerations. Has increased social security helped bring artists and the rest of society closer together? "Display compensation" and other forms of support have, it is true, raised the artists' income, but hardly society's understanding of how the enormous work which comes out of all this should actually be used. As a leading Swedish civil servant recently remarked to me, artists should rethink their role in society as a whole, and not concentrate only on their economic security.

Somewhere between opposition and indifference—the unofficial picture

Improved economic conditions for artists must naturally be seen as an unmixed blessing. But the various subsidy systems have also meant an administration and a structuring which make many young Scandinavian artists feel that their milieu has become too bureaucratic. Second-rate artists are enthusiastic about joining organizations, and become "apparatchiks," while artists who have long since made a success of it stay away because they can manage very well on their own. Young artists just making a breakthrough or looking for alternative forms of expression are not given enough backing by any party, and become odd men out.

But good finances are not enough to make a good artistic environment. And neither are strong trade unions. Many different factors interact at a specific time and release energy and activity. It is worth noting that now, in the beginning of the eighties, we are finding an optimism and an expectation of interesting lines of development in Scandinavia in the upcoming years. The level of information is much higher. Good young artists see their

6. Quoted in Joshua C. Taylor, *Across the Nation. Fine Art for Federal Buildings, 1972–1979*, exhibition catalogue (Washington, D.C., 1980), p. 4.

work as part of larger developments which are not decided by national borders alone. Important interaction is taking place within this specific Scandinavian field. But artists work in an area where conservatism, opposition and indifference help decide the framework and condition results.

Exhibitions can be seen as a direct indicator. It stands to reason that much that has happened in Denmark, for example, has been obstructed by traditional features in the exhibition system. Tradition has been cemented because of the particular, almost unique, Danish phenomenon: artists' groups and their annual exhibitions. Though these groups were originally founded by artists who had a kinship or common esthetic, they have come to carry on traditional standards unchallenged. Renewal in the form of new members or guests almost always occurs within the given framework. The groups' exhibitions are the most important events in the Danish art world. The joint platform gives the artists themselves greater attention than they would have received if they had exhibited their works in one-man shows.

The groups have primarily aimed at attracting a bourgeois public of art lovers and express an inertia in the milieu which has also delayed an understanding of new trends. This is actually surprising, since Danish art in the sixties and seventies was fairly rich in opposition groups interested in current ideas and views.

There are at least two reasons why avant-garde artists' activities at this time were not more effective. First of all, a significant part of these activities took the form of happenings and performances, which had a limited public and which were not sufficiently documented. Secondly, the abstract movement in the late thirties and forties and the founding of the COBRA group constituted such a breakthrough that they have dominated Danish art ever since. When we in Denmark speak of "modern art," it is still synonymous with the work of these artists, even though they are all around seventy years of age.

It is this generation on which the public has concentrated its interest. It is they who have been written about most. Their works have been safe investments for the liberal bourgeoisie which wants to collect modern art without daring to go right out to the front.

These are factors which, as I mentioned, to a certain extent overshadow what at times was the highly vigorous and energetic milieu in Copenhagen during the past two decades. There are active links with German art, in particular, in the wake of the COBRA movement. The links can be traced to the SPUR group in West Germany, to the international situationist movement and to Fluxus. And, as is the case in the other Scandinavian countries, there are a couple of small galleries which serve as catalysts.

German-born Arthur Kopcke (1928–1977)⁷ had a little gallery in Copenhagen from the beginning of the fifties which he ran as a sideline to his own important artistic work. Through it, he channeled such trends as le Nouveau Réalisme and Fluxus into the Danish art world, and it was Kopcke who introduced Denmark to Piero Manzoni. (This had the unusual result that Manzoni, with the intervention of a liberal patron in the summer of 1960, was able to work in Herning, in Jutland, and there carried out his longest line—7200 meters—which, sealed in a zinc box, still stands as one of the town's monuments!) The Fluxus group became known in the early sixties, and George Maciunas, Emmett Williams, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles and Ben Patterson were active in Copenhagen in 1962, the year in which the group also worked in Germany and London. The year after, John Cage and David Tudor took part in a Fluxus festival.

But it is contacts with Germany which have left lasting traces. The meeting between young Danish artists—Bjørn Nørgaard and Per Kirkeby among them—and Beuys was an expression of interaction. The Danish composer Henning Christiansen worked closely

7. About Kopcke, see *North*, no. 7/8 (Roskilde 1979). Text in Danish and English.

together with Beuys and wrote music for “Eurasienstab/fluxorum organum” and other pieces. Beuys performed part of his “Sibirische Symphonie”—“Eurasia”—in Copenhagen in 1966. The same year, Christiansen and Nørgaard participated together with Beuys in a performance of “Manresa” at the Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf.⁸

The Experimental Art School—an alternative school opposed to the teaching at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts—was very important for developments in the sixties. It emphasized the experimental situation and collective forms of work, and for some years set the framework for a highly intense milieu.

This is not the place to document the postwar art history of Denmark. The examples I have given can suffice to show the fruitful and positive side of being “a border area between Scandinavia and the rest of Europe.” This is bound up with the geographic proximity to the Continent and the fairly open atmosphere in Copenhagen. Young Danish artists today are keeping their connections with Germany. Many of them exhibit their works there, while others work there themselves. It is not surprising that German “neo-expressionism” has made a rapid breakthrough in Danish art as well.

The level of activity is different, and has a different character now than it did in the sixties. Artistically, we find a pluralism and an open situation which can be fruitful in the long run. Young artists have a great need for work grants and other subsidies from the Danish State Art Foundation.

However, the number of grants is being cut, and the minimum amount raised, because of the current recession and inflation. Pictorial artists are calling in vain for an effective organization which can negotiate directly with the state. Last year, a Danish sculptor tried to bring attention to the problem of lack of support for art when he blew up one of his granite sculptures. Judging from the reaction, it was a futile act.

Fairly few galleries exhibit completely new art and systematically follow new trends. Some official and semiofficial institutions purchase in a terribly traditional vein, and do not give any real support to experimental art. Company art societies are regular buyers at the large exhibitions in Denmark, as in the rest of Scandinavia, but they also keep to well-known artists and help maintain the status quo.

There has been a fairly intense debate in Denmark during the past couple of years about the founding of a museum of modern art in Copenhagen. But not even the most modest proposals can be carried out during the present recession, and nobody has thought about how an even tolerable collection could be amassed and expanded further with the prevailing international price level.

But Denmark already has the Louisiana Museum outside Copenhagen. Its collection has become quite significant over the years and its highly active exhibition policies have provided running information on international developments from the sixties onwards. Many of these exhibitions have had an important effect on the Danish art world.

The large museums in Scandinavia rarely assume the role of a window on the current world. They are traditional institutions and must thus retain a historical perspective. The Henie-Onstad Art Center outside Oslo is the Norwegian parallel to Louisiana as far as its facilities and location go, but has probably never had the same significance for art life in Norway. The most interesting in this connection is Stockholm’s Moderna Museet, which directly brought about a very high level of activity in Swedish art in the sixties. American Pop Art was shown there at a time when it was still in the making, and the museum also came to play a large role later as an inspirer and instigator. The museum’s importance was also felt in Finland, since it was easy for artists to go to Stockholm for important exhibitions.

8. Cf. C. Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys*, exhibition catalogue (The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1979), pp. 105, 110.

Sweden is largely similar to Denmark in its openness to new trends in art. Seen from neighboring countries, Swedish art has held a clear avant-garde position. Swedish artists have set themselves into the international context more rapidly than artists in the rest of Scandinavia.⁹ There is also a personal link to American art through Claes Oldenburg and Öyvind Fahlström, and this is incidentally a link which Swedish art is trying to maintain. Sweden is the only country in Scandinavia (but Denmark might be able to join it) to have a studio at P.S. 1 in New York and an annual grant to cover a stay there.

One can also see parts of this development as “trendy.” Some people feel that new trends are being accepted too quickly—in a hunt for something new—only to be left again if they can’t make it locally or be developed individually. There are clear signs of eclecticism throughout the sixties and seventies in Swedish art, but on the personal level, there is an attitude of relativism which lets the individual more or less change expression and views unhindered.

Geographic problems play a role in Sweden, as they do in Norway. Stockholm holds an obviously dominant place, especially now, with the marked increase in the number of galleries there (around a hundred in the Stockholm area alone). But regional centers such as Gothenburg and Malmö, whose proximity to Copenhagen is not an insignificant factor, partly counterbalance Stockholm.

The provincial museums do a great deal on their own initiative for young art. Organizational politics have, however, to a certain extent backfired on the artists themselves. The “display compensation” I mentioned before also eats into exhibition budgets.

One can sense a vital and almost anarchistic situation in young artists’ circles. They are experimenting in many directions, and here, too, the currently highly saleable German neo-expressionism has made a major impact. The German artist Jörg Immendorff was a guest teacher at the College of Art in 1981, and this can be seen as a sign of the direction interests are taking today. It is indisputable that he has already left his mark in Sweden.

The problem for young artists is, says one of the teachers at the school, that they go into an experimental situation with a suspended awareness of history. They have not brought their historical materiel out to the front, and thus lack certain necessary premises for the work they are doing. Considering how the rest of Scandinavia earlier viewed the situation in Sweden, it is interesting to note that young artists are more interested now in what is happening in neighboring countries, and that they are watching developments in Norway, for example, with great attention.

A young Finnish artist who has been working in avant-garde art for several years speaks of what he calls “a policy of exhaustion.” How is it possible, he wonders, that in Finland one can reach a certain level, receive support and favor to a certain point, and then no further. You can develop yourself and reach an acceptable level in your own development. But there is never anyone who is standing ready to catapult you further, out into a larger context.

It is regrettable if this is one of the consequences of the democratization of art life. Nonetheless, this is exactly what many artists and museum people are thinking about. All expect to get their slice of the cake—in other words of the subsidy systems—and everything is leveled out: the milieu becomes horizontal. It is no less important that Finnish isolation, the unwillingness to open up to international culture, is considered a modern dilemma by many young artists.

Cultural isolation is part of the Finnish experience. Finland’s location, far from the mainstream, contributes to what many Finns openly call a national inferiority complex. History shows that the Finns are not outgoing, but that they defend their territory. They

9. There is an up-to-date introduction to modern Swedish art: Olle Granath, *Another Light. Swedish Art Since 1945* (published by the Swedish Institute, n.d.). New, revised edition, 1982.

are slow to react to influences from abroad, but on the other hand safeguard their deep roots in the Finnish intellectual tradition. We wait a long time before we react, says one Finnish artist. And this is also true of modern art. The major trends come late and in highly modified form to Finland, but are well received. The Finns are, he says, not good at confronting artistic problems directly. Everything is taken indirectly, if not exactly hostilely.

The Art Museum of the Ateneum in Helsinki held three major informative exhibitions several years ago, aimed at orienting the Finns towards tendencies in new international art. These *Ars* 61, 69 and 74 all met with scepticism and opposition, but there should in fact be more such initiatives. They are just so difficult to realize. There are cultural agreements with countries in eastern Europe, whose exhibitions programs run smoothly, but there is no such channel for similar exhibitions from the West. This is Finland's exhibition system on the official level, and it is here the distortion of information comes, showing an overdose of exhibitions from the East.

The seventies was one of the most boring periods in the recent history of Finnish art. After 1968, we can see a polarization in society which also brought party politics into culture. Pictorial art was dominated in the following years by a wave of social realism. Pictures revelled in an old, rustic reality which was a mishmash of false show and nostalgia. We can see this social realism of a kind as a consequence of the political climate. Within pictorial art, it was alone counterbalanced by good Finnish constructivism.

As a direct consequence of the move to the left, some artists started a little organization in 1968 opposed to the large and highly bureaucratic Artists' Association, which was considered very traditional and conservative. Later, the new organization merged with the old one, and helped change attitudes there. Nonetheless, very old-fashioned questions are still being asked regarding art and its function in society, and many young artists find it difficult to get support within the Artists' Association. It is more interested in getting state subsidies for its members than it is in art's role in society. But an artist outside the organization can have difficulty in obtaining the necessary grants and can easily be boycotted or kept out of important activities.

Where has new art been these past years? The *Ars* exhibitions at the Art Museum of the Ateneum did have their effect—no doubt about it. The Free Art School in Helsinki has also opened the way for an understanding of new problematics of painting. There is now a new generation of artists of which much is expected, with women artists well represented.

The *Ars* exhibitions gave modern art a certain urgent currency, a challenge from outside to the local milieu. The response came from a little group of artists which unfortunately never gained the place it deserved in the seventies, something which is only now being realized in retrospect. It was the true avant-garde which manifested itself at Cheap Thrills, a little gallery opened in 1971 by the artist, theoretician and writer Jan Olof Mallander and kept going until 1977 in spite of economic difficulties. Mallander later called it "the good bad conscience of Finnish art."¹⁰

The gallery served as a platform for a group of artists which had no other place to exhibit its work and which also fell outside the categories Finnish exhibitions could think of accepting at the time. The artists called themselves the Reapers. Olli Lyytikäinen made his debut and had his most important early exhibitions at the gallery. There were also exhibitions of work by kindred artists from the rest of Scandinavia, and finally an attempt was made to introduce international art. Important contacts were established with other small but important art galleries elsewhere in Scandinavia: Gallery I in Bergen and Gallery SÚM in Reykjavik.

It must seem natural now that Cheap Thrills had to go under in the battle between the

10. A description of the gallery's history can be found in *North-Information* 80 (1979). Text in Swedish and English.

dominating trends, realism and constructivism, but just as natural, against this background, that the gallery had emerged. Cheap Thrills represented the little tendency to alarm which emphasized that not everything was as good or as self-sufficient as people wanted to pretend.

Many young Finnish artists feel very much like the nineteenth-century statesman who stressed that the Finns were neither Swedes nor Russians: they should be themselves, uniquely placed as they are between East and West. A new generation of artists is about to break down Finland's isolation. There is a more open atmosphere and fresher air in the debate.

A largely similar development can also be found in Norwegian art today. The events of 1968 marked an epoch everywhere, in Norway no less than in Finland. And the Norwegian situation is perhaps also the one which is most like the Finnish: there are above all the same powerful ties with tradition.

The many artist-run activities and powerful trade organizations which have helped bring about results in negotiations with the state are on one level an expression of a close-knit national art life. And self-sufficiency and the national effort are dramatically and demonstratively expressed in the large decorations for the Oslo Town Hall: pictorial art used as a national manifestation.

Perhaps because of powerful organizations, set patterns and relative predictability in the art world, established artists quickly become staid and languid, and stop taking the lead, notes a young Norwegian artist. And this is actually strange, since Oslo has a bohemian tradition which earlier gave the city a vital and significant cultural atmosphere.

Oslo is still the important center it was. This is where established artists settle. The number of galleries has increased considerably in recent years, and there is a fairly active exhibition schedule. But because of its geography, Norway has a decentralized art world, where regional activities and differences are expressed, and where mediation in general is a key concept in cultural policy. Each year, regional exhibitions are arranged by the district organizations of pictorial artists in cooperation with local art societies. In the later seventies, six artists' centers were established in various parts of the country which run galleries and exhibitions and disseminate other kinds of information. All are run by artists themselves.

Art education is to a certain extent decentralized, too, since the State Art Academy in Oslo has now been joined by the Vestlandet Art Academy (in Bergen), which became a state institution in 1981, and the Art School in Trondheim. It is difficult to catch sight from Oslo of much of what is happening in the regional centers. To get into this milieu, to make oneself known as a young artist at all, evidently involves joining a process which is highly structured. Both the Norwegian representatives in this exhibition, Bård Breivik and Arvid Pettersen, are examples of how it can also be done, in a true interplay with essential factors outside the organizations.

Both artists come from Bergen, which has traditionally had a highly localized and very reactionary cultural life, without any major external influences. And contacts with Oslo have been traditionally distant. Many of Bergen's young artists have gone to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen for their education, instead of going to Oslo. Danish artists served as visiting teachers in Bergen even before the school was given its present status.

A group of artists joined forces in the midst of this provincial isolation in the late sixties. The result of their work together was a progressive interplay, a release of energy based on work with impulses from without and on mutual openness in the exchange and discussion

of information. At the same time, certain excellent institutes within the humanities were very much in evidence at the University, and a new, young generation of writers began to emerge in Bergen. In other words, a stimulating milieu which involved science, literature, art and music gave activities a new direction and energy. And none of this was burdened by tradition, as in Oslo.

The Flash (Lyn) group emerged, which established Gallery I without any real economic basis in 1969. The group's own artists exhibited their works there, but the gallery also held Scandinavian exhibitions and worked in cooperation with Mallander's Cheap Thrills in Helsinki and the SÚM group in Iceland. Close professional and social contacts were important, and the interplay between theory and practice was utilized in the persistent efforts to build up the Vestlandet Art Academy, where new teaching methods were adopted. The break with traditional attitudes was obvious to all when the Flash group made a prominent debut in Oslo with the controversial exhibition *Bellevue, Bellevue* in 1972.¹¹

Iceland lies quite apart geographically from the rest of Scandinavia. This isolation has, on the other hand, meant that it has been equally natural for Icelanders to seek out contacts in the United States and Britain and on the European continent, as it has for them to seek them in the rest of Scandinavia. The last few generations of Icelandic artists have battled heavy odds and managed to create a milieu and to gain a central place in the European art of the past decade. These artists have, it is true, had a better forum abroad than in Iceland. Young artists feel as if they are working in a vacuum back home; in any case, they do not meet with any real sympathy. There is a generation gap and a lack of understanding between them and older artists, and between them and the public. This is a strange indifference when we consider the level of activity and the quality of the work being done.

In spite of difficult economic conditions, Iceland has a vital art world. Critic Adalsteinn Ingolfsson has registered something like 170 exhibitions annually for the past couple of years. But avant-garde art accounts for a modest fraction of the official picture.

Naturally, this is an important reason why Icelandic artists have preferred to settle in other places. Earlier, Copenhagen was a natural destination, but some artists also went to France and Germany. The Gudmundsson brothers' decision to move to Amsterdam was of decisive importance for new Icelandic art, just as important for what is happening nowadays as what the great Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness called "the Danish-Icelandic divan" was for the artists of the thirties and forties. In recent years, the Academy in Maastricht could almost be considered an Icelandic school. Something between twenty and twentyfive Icelandic artists have been trained there and, at the moment, the Academy still has a handful of Icelandic students.

The very young generation is taking a chance and staying home. A circle of interested people has after all created something which is becoming a milieu. And artists can join together in opposition to the official milieu, which has largely let them down.

One interesting expression of this is the Living Art Museum (Nýlistasafn), which was started by a group of older artists from the influential SÚM group together with younger artists in an attempt to preserve and document the central segment of new Icelandic art which SÚM represents.

The Living Art Museum received a large donation of work by Dieter Rot (who was in Iceland almost without interruption from 1957 to 1964), and works by Daniel Spoerri, Richard Hamilton, Joseph Beuys and other artists who had been in Iceland and worked together with SÚM artists.

The museum is now trying to use its modest funds to make a systematic documentation

11. See "Norwegian Contemporary Art," *North* No. 10-11 (1982). Text in Danish, Norwegian and English.

of the art of the sixties in Iceland. Young artists can join the museum by simply giving one piece of work to it annually. The Living Art Museum now has good exhibition facilities and arranges regular showings.

SÚM emerged from a dissatisfaction with the set, conservative and worn-out art milieu. The artists who formed the association “had in common dissatisfaction and society’s contempt, but not very much else,” as Gudbergur Bergsson expressed it. “All SÚM art is permeated with Icelandic eccentricity, the only characteristic and independent attitude that has been held in Iceland, an attitude of isolation, the individual, and the outlaw.”¹²

These are perhaps not features of the characteristic and easily recognizable Icelandic version of conceptual art in the seventies. This special, minimal, laconic, but also lyrical Icelandic expression was accelerated by a kinship with certain Dutch conceptual artists, based on personal relationships and a free exchange of experiences (Sigurdur Gudmundsson works in The Netherlands while Douwe Jan Bakker works in Iceland) and contacts which reveal a kindred mentality.

The central force in art these past few years is Magnús Pálsson. It would be difficult to overestimate his importance as an artist and as a teacher of the new generation. As a teacher at the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts in Reykjavik in the seventies, he among other things arranged to invite visiting teachers—Robert Filliou, Dieter Rot, Bakker and Dick Higgins are names which give a certain impression of the directions in which things were going—even though finances only allowed a short stay for each artist. Now there are plans to establish a stop-over program, in which artists on their way between Europe and the United States can “hop off” in Iceland and give lectures.

It was also Pálsson who took the initiative in founding the Mobile Summer Workshop, a workshop planned on generous lines for conceptual art. It can only be hoped that the experiment will do better than the Experimental Environment arrangement, which was held outside Reykjavik in the summer of 1980. Young Scandinavian artists working with environmental art were supposed to meet there and carry out a number of projects. Later they were to implement their ideas and work in localities in the rest of Scandinavia. But without a solid organization and financing, the experiment partly misfired.

Halldór Laxness, in his little book about the painter Svavar Gudnason, tells of a visit Alfred Barr, Jr., once made to Reykjavik. He wanted to see works by the Icelandic painter Jón Stefánsson, who, together with other talented Scandinavians, studied with Matisse in the years before the First World War. Barr wanted to see how an Icelandic artist had reacted to such influences. He was shown “some pictures of overworked cliffs and glaciers, shaggy horses and seascapes with breakers as thick as oatmeal [and] hurried to look away without saying a word.”

“Nonetheless,” continued Laxness, “it should be possible for an American to comprehend the incomprehensible in the idea that Jón Stefánsson or some other Scandinavian, or for that matter also some American, regardless how gifted, could be made into a Matisse no. 2 through a process of training in Paris in 1908, even under Matisse himself.”¹³

The good young artists in Scandinavia do not want to be a copy of some contemporary master or other, either. Their field of operation lies at the crossroads between tradition and new creativity, and I would guess that most of them will agree with the Finnish writer Jörn Donner—who writes in Swedish and thinks like a European!—when he says the following in his searching and self-revealing diary: “I consider it an important element in all artistic work to try to question or define national identity, to know what nation one belongs to and why.”¹⁴

Translated by Martha Gaber Abrahamsen

12. “H₂O, Ny Islands kunst” [new Icelandic art], exhibition catalogue (1974). Text in Danish, Icelandic and English.
13. H. Laxness, *Svavar Gudnason* (Copenhagen, 1968). Danish text with English summary.
14. *Jag, Jörn Johan Donner född den 5 februari 1933 i Helsingfors, Finland* [I, J. J. D., born February 5, 1933, in Helsinki, Finland] (Helsinki, 1980), p. 60.

I have received information and help from many artists, colleagues and civil servants as I collected the material for this article. They include Tuula Arkio, Bengt von Bonsdorff, J. O. Mallander, Olli Lyytikäinen, Paul Osipow and Kalervo Siikala in Finland; Mats B., Anders Clason, Olle Kåks, Björn Springfeldt and Mailis Stensman in Sweden; Magne Malmanger, Arvid Pettersen and J. Aanderaa in Norway; and Adalsteinn Ingólfsson in Iceland. I would like to thank all of them. I naturally bear full responsibility for the interpretation of all these facts and information.

Bård Breivik

Lars Englund

Hreinn Fridfinnsson

Sigurður Guðmundsson

Per Kirkeby

Olle Kåks

Olli Lyytikäinen

Bjørn Nørgaard

Paul Osipow

Arvid Pettersen

Bård Breivik

Born 1948 in Bergen, Norway. Lives in Stockholm.
Studies at Bergen College of Art and Crafts 1967–70
and St. Martin's School of Art, London 1970–71.
Co-founder of artists' group LYN (Flash).
Professor at Art Academy of Bergen 1974–79.
Since 1982 professor at College of Art, Stockholm.



ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

I:1, Gallery 1, Bergen 1974
Gallery Wallner, Malmö, Sweden 1979
Gallery Ahlner, Stockholm 1979
Gallery Dobeloug, Oslo 1979
Gallery Sculptor, Helsinki 1981
Trondheim Art Association, Trondheim, Norway 1981
Gallery Nemo, Kiel, West Germany 1981
Fiber, Henie-Onstad Art Center, Hovikodden, Norway 1981
Fiber, Galerie Aronowitsch, Stockholm 1982
Fiber, Skånska Art Museum, Lund, Sweden 1982

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

Paris Biennale 1975
Eye to Eye, Liljevalchs Art Hall, Stockholm 1976
Norwegian Art of the 70's, The Cultural House, Stockholm 1978
Norwegian Art Today, Kunsthalle, Kiel, West Germany 1981
Matter/Memory, Art Hall, Lund, Sweden 1982; also shown at
The Artists' House, Oslo, Ateneum, Helsinki, and Charlottenborg, Copenhagen 1982

SCENOGRAPHY

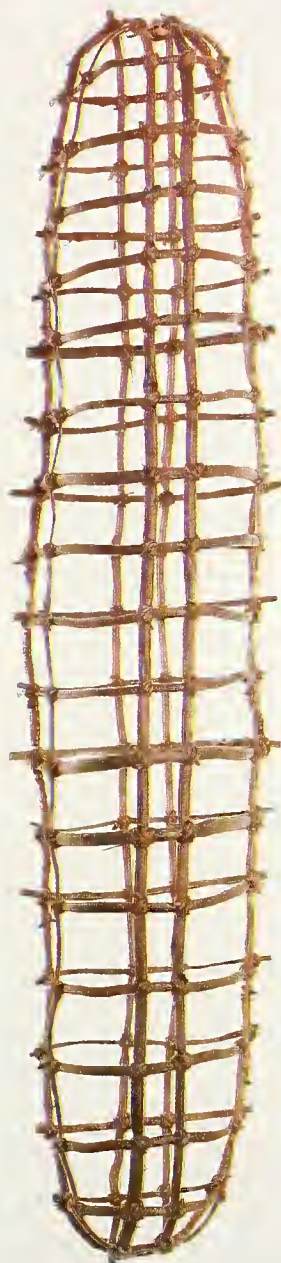
The Pyramids, a triptych for The New Hall, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1979
TER(R), The Cultural House, Stockholm, and Henie-Onstad Art Center, Hovikodden, Norway 1981

REPRESENTED

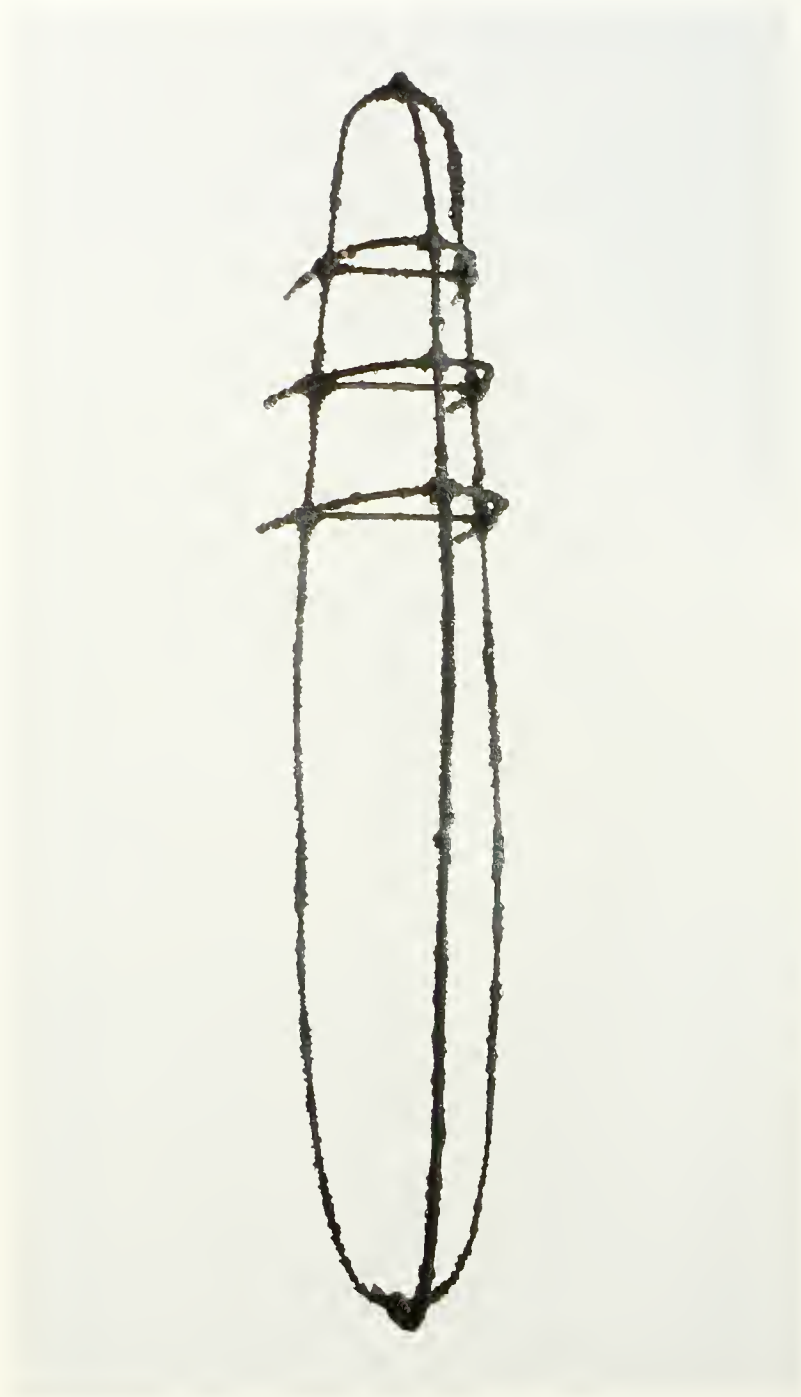
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Norwegian Arts Council, Oslo
Bergen Picture Gallery
Malmö Museum, Malmö, Sweden
Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo
The Art Collection of the City of Oslo
Ateneum, Helsinki
Kunsthalle, Kiel, West Germany
Gothenburg Art Museum, Gothenburg, Sweden
The Henie-Onstad Collection, Hovikodden, Norway

"The following photographs show models, on a scale of 1:4, of the works executed for the exhibition. The hull shape has been my prime object of investigation for three years now, and the process has resulted in works that I have seen in many different contexts and exhibition rooms. My obsession with this shape stems from its 'archetypal' quality; insect, hull, container, building, vehicle. A shape that reminds us of something, some almost forgotten moment. These forms relate in the deepest sense to our perception of time. As constructions, emanating from the mind, they picture our need to shape our culture, and suggest ways of thinking or dreaming. They lay bare levels of abstraction in a specific period of time.

The tradition of sculpture is very much concerned with mass and solidness of shape, which create a monumental distance. Another tradition stems from the crafting of artifacts for use. My concern, in these works, is with the field of energy between these two poles, to work with both the mass and the shell."



BÅRD BREIVIK
Untitled I. 1982
Hazel wood
83 × 14 × 14" (210 × 36 × 36 cm.)
Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



BÅRD BREIVIK
Untitled II. 1982
Steel (forged)
83 × 14 × 14" (210 × 36 × 36 cm.)
Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



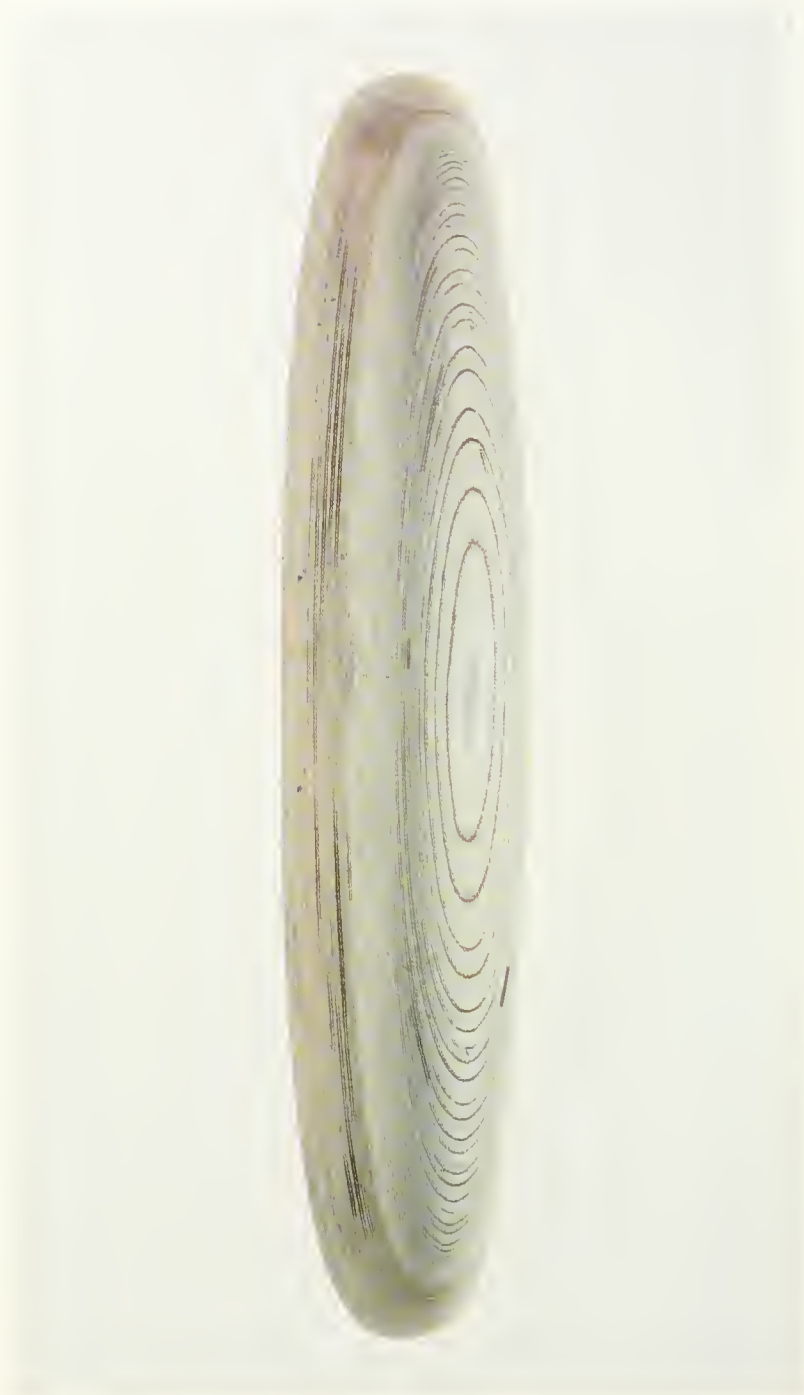
BÅRD BREIVIK

Untitled III. 1982

Steel ($\frac{1}{16}$ " – 8 mm.)

83 × 14 × 9½" (210 × 36 × 24 cm.)

Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



BÅRD BREIVIK

Untitled IV. 1982

Laminated wood and zinc

83 × 14 × 9½" (210 × 36 × 24 cm.)

Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



BÅRD BREIVIK

Untitled V. 1982

Mixed media

83 × 14 × 8¼" (210 × 36 × 21 cm.)

Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



BÅRD BREIVIK

Untitled VI. 1982

Mixed media

83 × 14 × 8¼" (210 × 36 × 21 cm.)

Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



BÅRD BREIVIK

Untitled VII. 1982

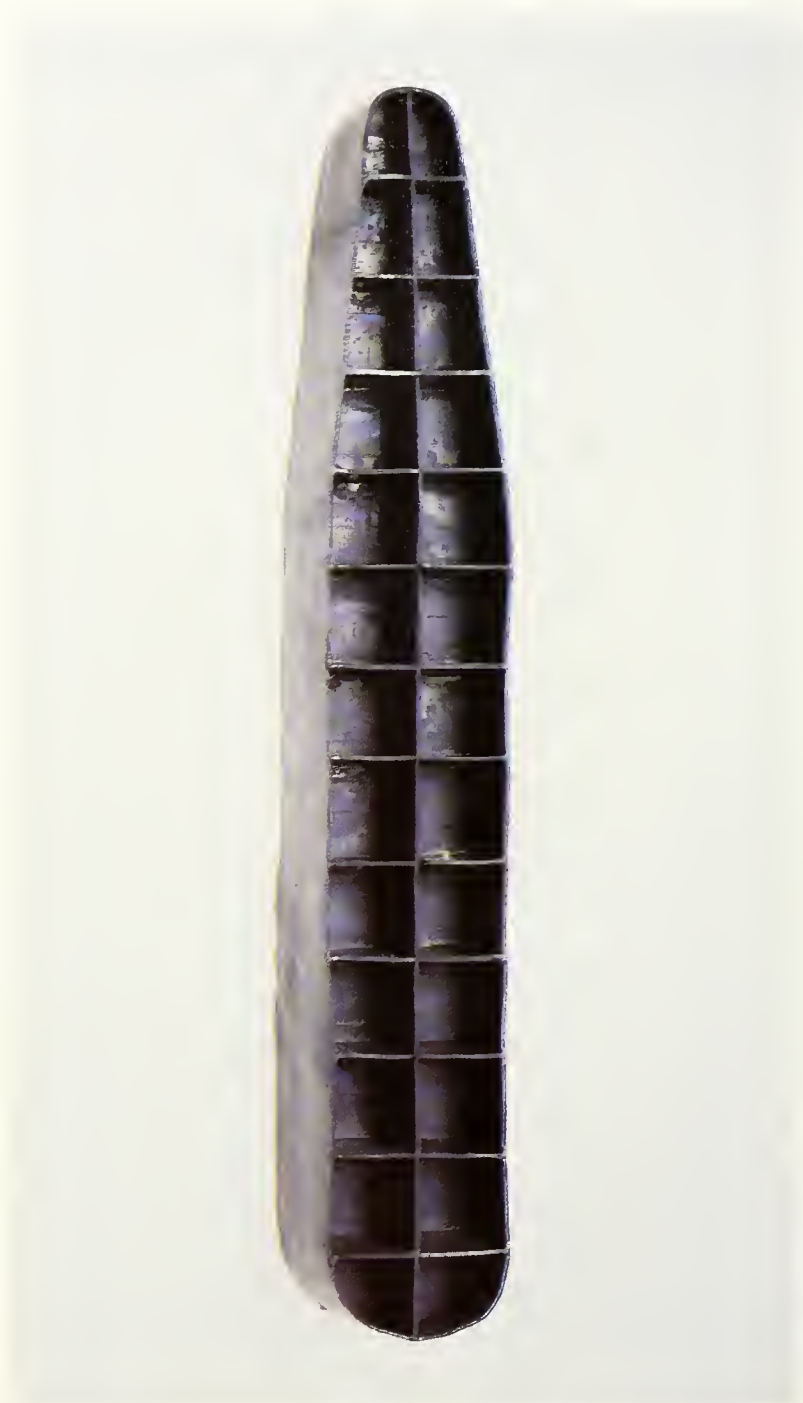
a) Black rubber

83 × 14 × 7¹/₁₆" (210 × 36 × 18 cm.)

b) Vulcan rubber

83 × 14 × 7¹/₁₆" (210 × 36 × 18 cm.)

Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



BÅRD BREIVIK

Untitled VIII. 1982

Lead

83 × 14 × 7 1/8" (210 × 36 × 20 cm.)

Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg



BÅRD BREIVIK

Untitled IX. 1982

Mixed media

83 × 14 × 8¼" (210 × 36 × 21 cm.)

Photo: Carl Henrik Tillberg

Lars Englund

Born 1933 in Stockholm. Lives in Stockholm.
Studies with Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen, Stockholm
1950–51 and with Fernand Léger, Paris 1952.

For their generous help and support Lars Englund wishes to express his gratitude to:

Billy Klüver, New York, Dr. Byron Pipes and Dr. William Dick at the Center for Composite Materials, University of Delaware, SAAB-SCANIA, Linköping, Sweden, Hercules Inc., Wilmington, Del. and to Ciba-Geigy, Gothenburg, Sweden.



ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

Lilla Paviljongen, Stockholm 1953
Galerie Burén, Stockholm 1965, 1967, 1974
Galeria Foksal, Warsaw 1967, 1971, 1976
Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris 1968
Galerie Astley, Köping, Sweden 1974
Galerie Aronowitsch, Stockholm 1975, 1978, 1980
P.S.1, New York 1980
Centre Culturel Suédois, Paris 1981
Galleriet, Lund, Sweden 1981

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

Eleven Swedish Artists, Arts Council, London 1963
Art in Concrete, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1964
Paris Biennale 1965
Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki 1965
Inner and Outer Space, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1966
Six Painters from Sweden, Arts Council, London 1966
Collection S, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1967
Structures gonflables, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris 1968
Six Swedish Artists, Camden Art Centre, London 1969
Licht—Objekt—Bewegung—Raum, Nürnberg, Stuttgart; Louisiana, Humlebæk, Denmark; Gothenburg, Sweden 1970

Svenskt Alternativ, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1970

ROSC' '71, Dublin 1971

Alternative Suédoise, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris 1971

Nordic Art, Nordic Art Society, Reykjavik 1972

International Events '72–76, Venice Biennale 1976

ROSC' '77, Dublin 1977

Nordic Pavilion, Venice Biennale 1978

The nordic contribution to the Venice Biennale 1978, also shown at Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1979, Århus Art Museum, Denmark, Nordic Arts Centre, Helsinki, Gallery F 15, Moss, Norway

Middelheimpark, Antwerp 1979

Skulptur im 20 Jahrhundert, Wenkenpark, Basel 1980

Sculpture Now, Galerie Nordenhake, Malmö, Sweden 1981

Moderna Museet Visits Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels 1981

Englund—Kirschenbaum—Ohlin, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1982

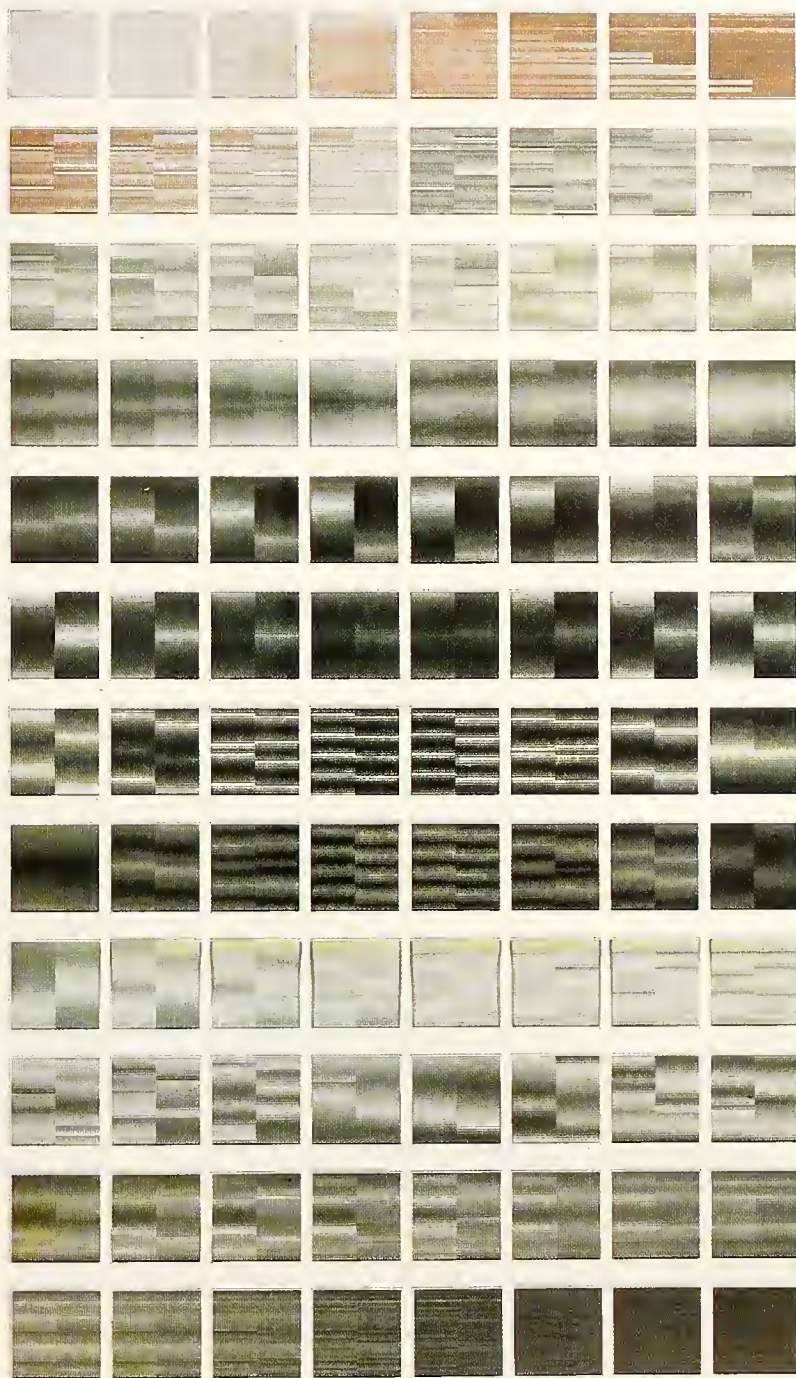
REPRESENTED

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Museum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź, Poland

Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Nationalmuseum, Stockholm



LARS ENGLUND

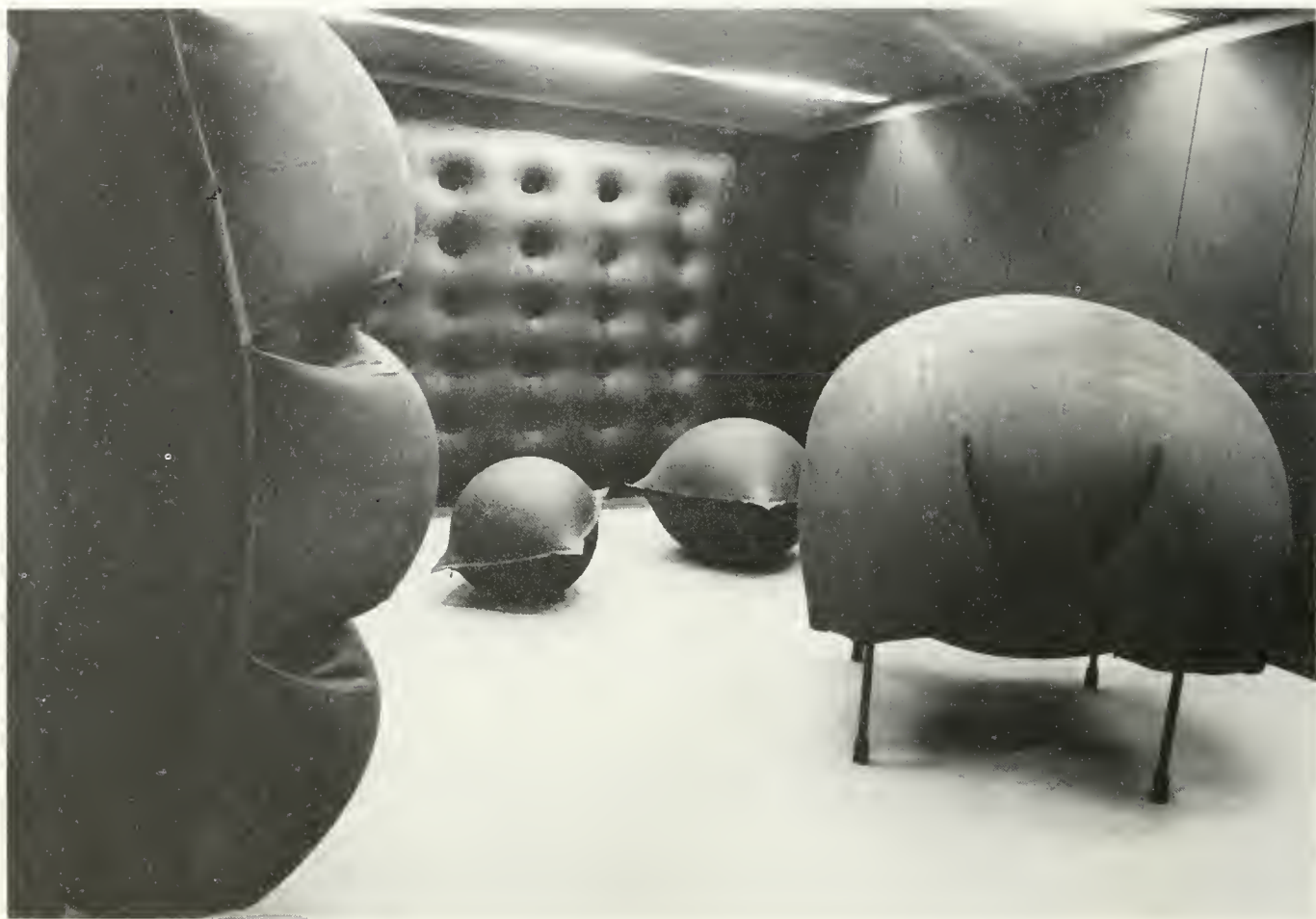
Montage for Animated Film. 1960–63

Oil lacquer on foil

66 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (168 × 100 cm.)

Collection William Aronowitsch, Stockholm

Photo: Jan Jansson



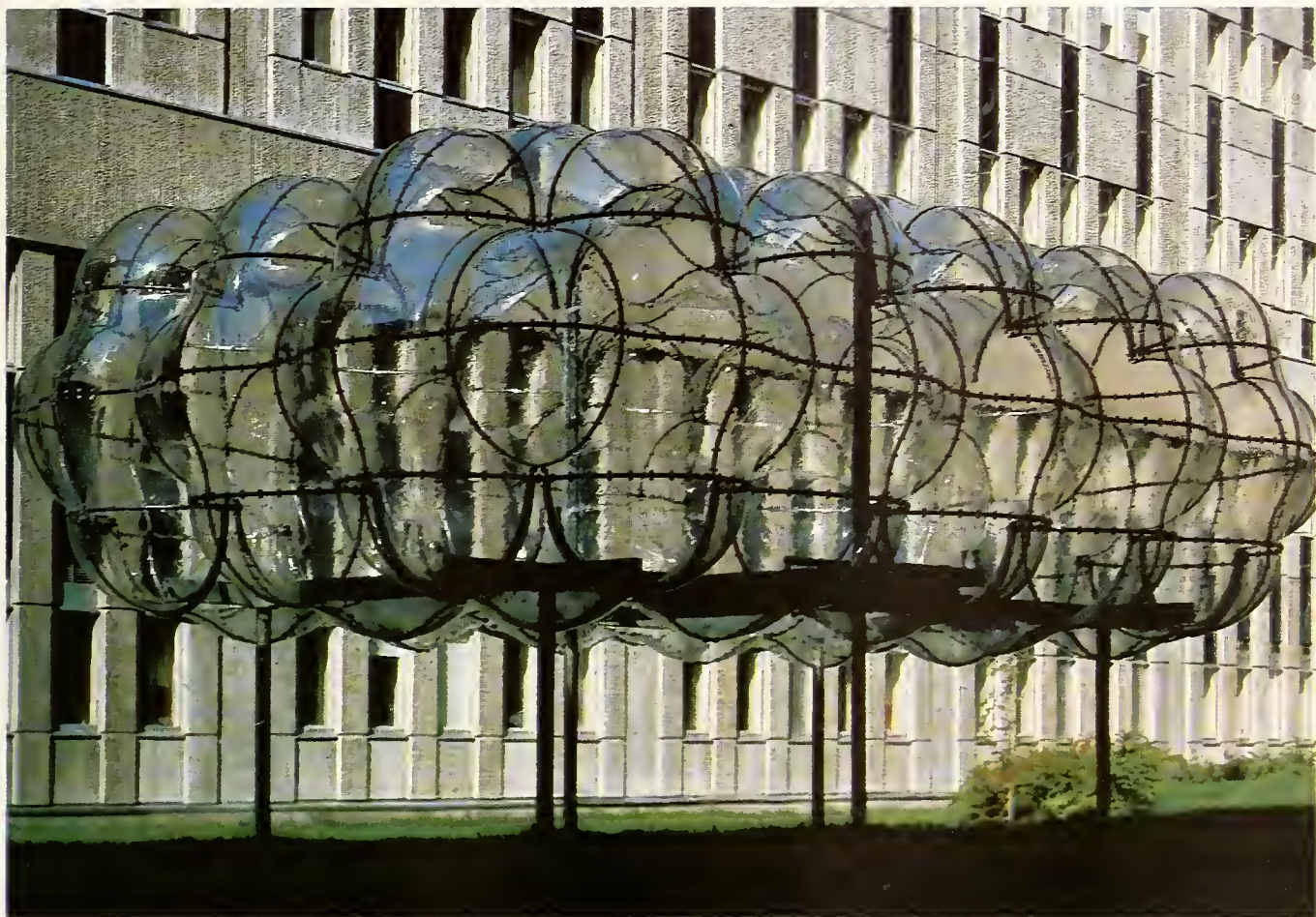
LARS ENGLUND

Volumes. 1964–66

Rubber

Exhibition at Galerie Foksal PSP Warsaw 1966

Photo: Eustachy Kossakowski



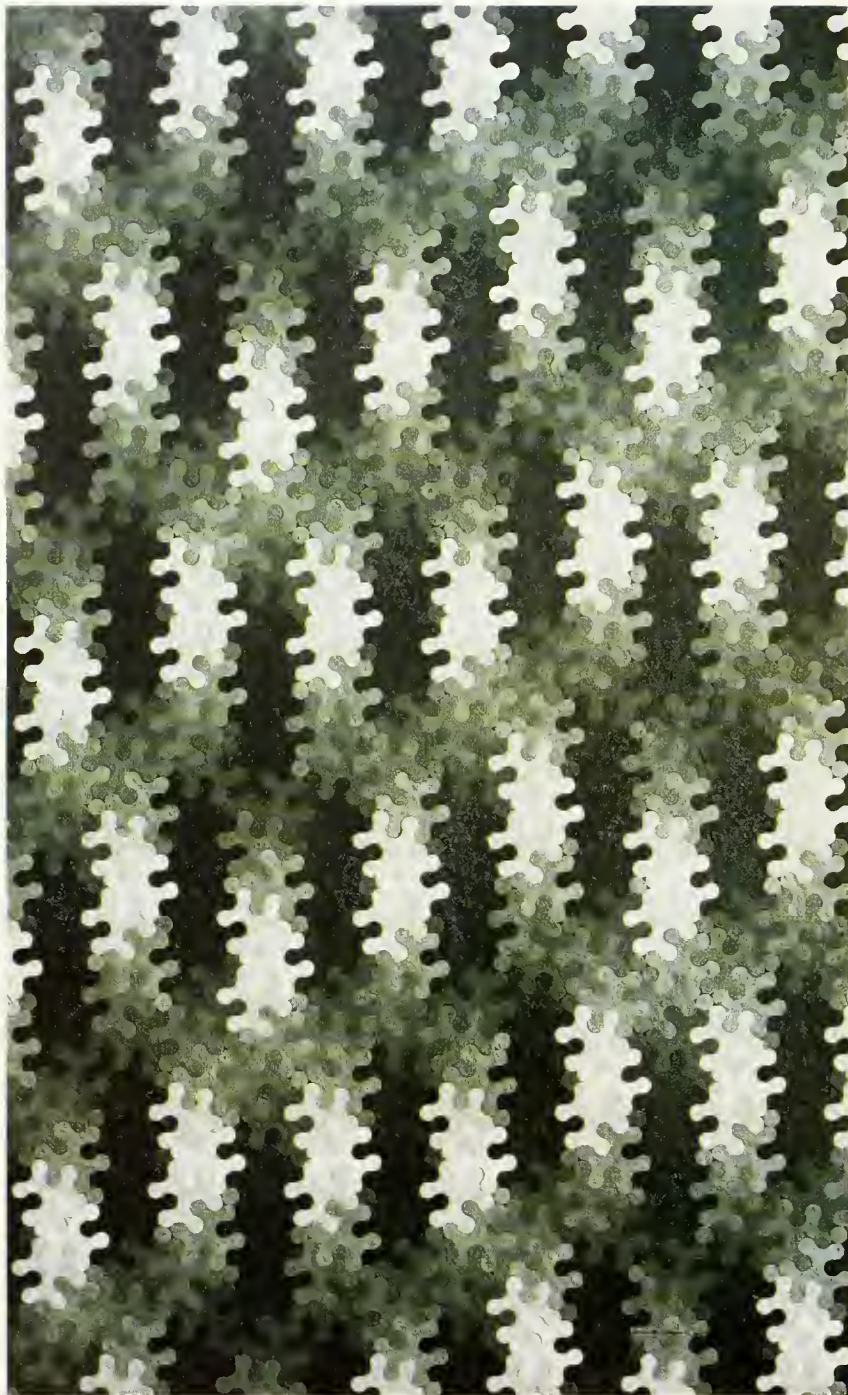
LARS ENGLUND

Building. 1968–73

Polycarbonate, steel and rubber

315 × 212 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 126" (800 × 540 × 320 cm.)

Photo: Ivo Englund



LARS ENGLUND

Pars pro toto. 1975

Felt

66 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 41" (168 × 104 cm.)

Photo: Jan Almerén



LARS ENGLUND

Pars pro toto

Venice Biennale 1978

Delrin

118 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 51 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 51 $\frac{3}{16}$ " (300 × 130 × 130 cm.)

164 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 70 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 70 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (420 × 180 × 180 cm.)

Photo: Ivo Englund



LARS ENGLUND

Pars pro toto

Venice Biennale 1978

Delrin

157½ × 78¾ × 78¾" (400 × 200 × 200 cm.)

Photo: Ivo Englund



LARS ENGLUND

Pars pro toto. 1979

Polycarbonate

37 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (95 × 45 cm.)

Collection William Aronowitsch, Stockholm



LARS ENGLUND

Relative

P.S.1, New York 1980

Graphitefibre

$137\frac{13}{16} \times 315 \times 137\frac{13}{16}$ "

(350 × 800 × 350 cm.)

Photo: Yvonne Möller



LARS ENGLUND

Relative

Centre Culturel Suédoise, Paris 1981

Graphitefibre

$157\frac{1}{2} \times 118\frac{1}{8}$ " (400 × 300 cm.)

Photo: Eustachy Kossakowski



LARS ENGLUND

Relative

Gustav III:s Antikmuseum, Royal Palace, Stockholm 1982

Model for sculpture for Guggenheim, scale 1:5

Graphitefibre

78¾ × 47¼" (200 × 120 cm.)

Photo: Yvonne Möller

Hreinn Fridfinnsson

Born 1943 in Dölum, Iceland. Lives in Amsterdam.
Studies at College of Art and Crafts in Reykjavik
1958–60. Co-founder of artists' group SÚM and
Gallery Súm.



ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)
Gallery 845, Amsterdam 1971
In-Out Center, Amsterdam 1972
Gallery Súm, Reykjavik 1974
Gallery Gaëtan, Geneva 1976
Gallery Sudurgata 7, Reykjavik 1977
Seriaal, Amsterdam 1977
Gallery Elsa von Honolulu, Ghent, Belgium 1977
Gallery Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam 1979
Gallery Bama, Paris 1979

GROUP SHOWS (selection)
Súm I, Asmundarsalur, Reykjavik 1965
Súm III, Gallery Súm, Reykjavik 1969
Súm IV, Gallery Súm, Reykjavik 1971
Súm Festival, Reykjavik 1972
Paris Biennale 1973
H₂O, Nikolai Church, Copenhagen 1974
T'Hoogt, Utrecht 1974

Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem 1974
Art Museum, Lucerne 1975
Gallery Waalkens, Finsterwolde, The Netherlands 1975
Ça va? ça va, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges
Pompidou, Paris 1977.
Eleven Contemporary Icelandic Artists, Malmö Art Hall,
Malmö, Sweden 1978
Personal Worlds, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1979

REPRESENTED

National Museum, Reykjavik
The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik
Municipal Collection, Reykjavik
The Workers' Union's Museum, Reykjavik
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris
Netherlands Government Collection
Municipal Collection, Amsterdam

The Origin

In the book *Islenskur Adall (Icelandic Aristocracy)* by the author Thorbergur Thordarson, which was first published in 1938, there is a little story of a man called Solon Gudmundsson—an “aristocrat.” He lived in a fishing village in the North West of Iceland where he had a small house. He was a very hospitable man and his house served as a private hotel for many other “aristocrats” who did not have a fixed address or position in society, but chose freedom and mobility to be more fit for the study and enjoyment of life. Solon Gudmundsson was a man of many talents. Early in life he became familiar and efficient with most jobs on the sea and on land. For example he was a good carpenter. He composed a very special and personal kind of poetry which he himself called “light jokes.” He also made several interesting objects of no practical purpose except to help develop his and other people’s consciousness. It is likely that he was considered mad by most people, but his madness was tolerated because he did not bother anybody, could look after himself and even help others, and because he and his acts were a welcome source of conversation in the village. When Solon Gudmundsson was already an old man, he sold his house and started building a new one, using mostly wood and corrugated iron, a widely used building material in Iceland.

The following is a shortened and freely translated extract from the book *Islenskur Adall*:

He started building the house in the following manner: first he made a wooden construction in an ordinary way, then fixed corrugated iron sheets on the inside of the wooden frame and started living in the building at this stage. The building process was to continue depending on the economic situation and other circumstantial conditions. Solon wanted to build this house completely in the reverse order of traditional architecture, that is to say putting the corrugated iron on the inside and finishing with wallpaper on the outside. When Solon was asked why he planned to build the house in this way, he answered with a faint smile: “Wallpaper is to please the eye, love, so it is reasonable to have it on the outside where more people can enjoy it.” But Solon did not get very far with his project because some very concerned friends managed with much difficulty to persuade him to retire to an old people’s home. There he was well cared for until he died on the 18th of October, 1931.



HREINN FRIDFINNSSON

Houseproject. 1974

One of sixteen color photographs
each 8 × 11½" (20 × 29 cm.)

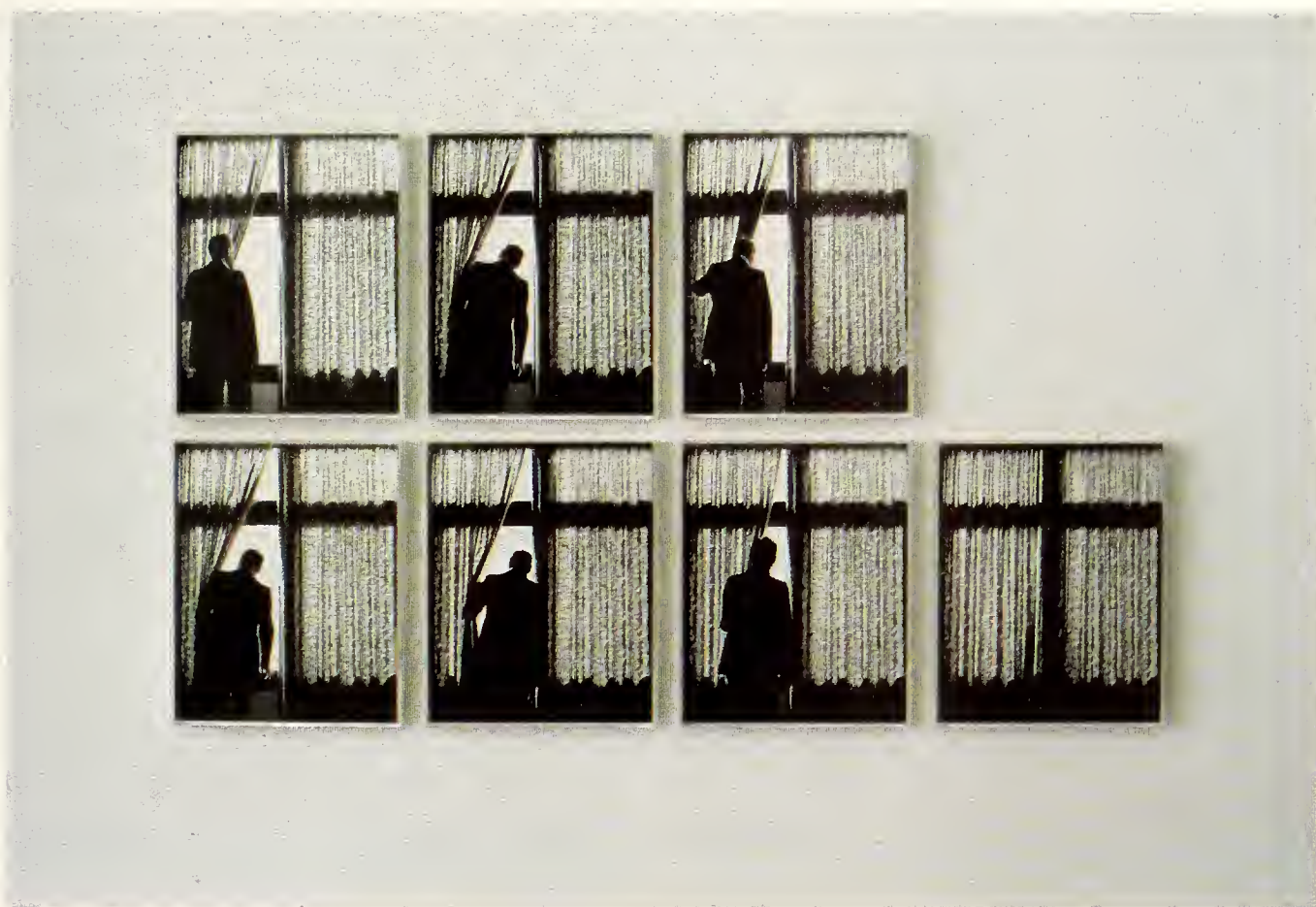
Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm

The House

In the summer of 1974, a small house was built in the same fashion as Solon Gudmundsson intended to do about half a century ago, that is to say an inside-out house. It was completed on the 21st of July. It is situated in an unpopulated area of Iceland, in a place from which no other man-made objects can be seen.

The existence of this house means that "outside" has shrunk to the size of a closed space formed by the walls and the roof of the house. The rest has become "inside."

This house harbors the whole world except itself.



HREINN FRÍÐFINNSSON

Seven Times. 1978–79

Photograph

31½ × 47¼" (80 × 120 cm.)

State-Owned Art Collections Department, The Netherlands



HREINN FRIDFINNSSON

A While. 1978–79

Photograph, watercolor and woodcarving, three panels,
total $23\frac{5}{8} \times 47\frac{1}{4}$ " (60 × 120 cm.)



HREINN FRIDFINNSSON

Couplet. 1978–79

Photograph, watercolor and woodcarving, four panels,
total $39\frac{3}{8} \times 47\frac{1}{4}$ " (100 × 120 cm.)



HREINN FRÍÐFINNSSON

The Hour. 1980

Floor piece, woodcarving,
49¼ × 74⅓" (125 × 190 cm.)

Wall piece, marble, wood, gold and silver,
53⅓ × 74⅓" (135 × 190 cm.)

Collection the City of Amsterdam

Photo: Bob van Danzig



HREINN FRÍÐFINNSSON

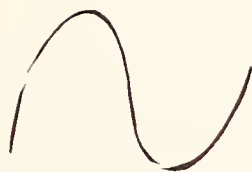
Territory. 1982

Photograph and chalk on paper
70 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 70 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (150 × 150 cm.)

Collection the City of Amsterdam



HREINN FRÍÐFINNSSON
From Time To Time. 1978–79
 Photograph and text, six panels,
 total 27 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 63" (70 × 160 cm.)



HREINN FRIDFINNSSON
Sketch for **Serenata**. 1982
Photograph, glass and wood
63 × 102³/₈" (160 × 260 cm.)

Sigurdur Gudmundsson

Born 1942 in Reykjavik, Iceland. Lives in Amsterdam.
Studies at College of Art and Crafts in Reykjavik
1960–63, Academie 63 in Haarlem 1963–64 and
Ateliers 63, Haarlem 1970–71.
Co-founder of artists' group SÚM and Gallery SÚM.

ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

Gallery Súm, Reykjavik 1969
Gallery Baldrich, Mönchengladbach, West Germany 1971
Gallery 845, Amsterdam 1972
In-Out Center, Amsterdam 1972
Art Museum, Lucerne 1975
Seriaal, Amsterdam 1976
Gallery Súm, Reykjavik 1977
Gallery Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam 1979
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1980
Gallery Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam 1981
Kruithuis, Den Bosch, The Netherlands 1982

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

Súm III, Gallery Súm, Reykjavik 1969
Nordic Youth Biennale, Artists' House, Oslo 1970
Súm IV, Museum Fodor, Amsterdam 1971
The Reykjavik Art Festival, Reykjavik 1972
Paris Biennale 1973
H₂O, Nikolai Church, Copenhagen, 1974
Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem 1974
Gallery Waalkens, Finsterwolde, The Netherlands 1975
International Events '72–76, Venice Biennale 1976
Ça va? ça va, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges
Pompidou, Paris 1977
Nordic Pavilion, Venice Biennale 1978
The Nordic contribution to the Venice Biennale 1978, also



shown at Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1979, Århus Art
Museum, Denmark, Nordic Arts Centre, Helsinki, Gallery
F 15, Moss, Norway

Eleven Contemporary Icelandic Artists, Malmö Art Hall,
Malmö, Sweden 1978

Personal Worlds, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1979

To Do with Nature, Pulchri Studio, The Hague 1979

The Sydney Biennale 1979

Five Northerners, Trollhättan, Borås and Gothenburg Art
Museums, Sweden 1980

Aktuelle Kunst aus den Niederlanden, Landes pavillon, Stutt-
gart 1980

Pier and Ocean, Hayward Gallery, London 1980

Contemporary Art from The Netherlands, Museum of Con-
temporary Art, Chicago 1982

'60–'80, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1982

REPRESENTED

The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik

Municipal Collection, Reykjavik

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

Rijksmuseum Kroller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris

Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Netherlands Government Collection

Municipal Collection, Amsterdam

The quality of any art depends on the relationship between the artist and his work.

A good work of art will be an imprint of his soul. Only by loving and admiring such works is one able to journey in the landscape of art. For years, I lived in that landscape.

Nowadays my impulses to make art are drawn, increasingly, from another landscape, from that of the ebb and flow, sun and rain, day and night, love and grief.

But I am, I must admit, frequently homesick for the beautiful experiences I enjoyed during my journey through the landscape of art.



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON

Rendez-vous. 1976

Photograph and text on cardboard

28 $\frac{7}{16}$ × 35 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (72.5 × 91 cm.)

Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON

Molecule. 1979

Color photograph and text

51 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 59 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (130 × 150 cm.)

Collection Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON

The Katanes Beast. 1981

Drawing

47¼ × 74⅜" (120 × 189 cm.)

Photo: Wiebe Schipmolder



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON

Untitled Black Sculpture. 1981

Tar on wood and glass

137¹³/₁₆ × 27⁹/₁₆ × 27⁹/₁₆" (350 × 70 × 70 cm.)

Photo: Pieter Mol



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON

Mathematics. 1979

Color photograph and text
45¼ × 50⅞" (115 × 128 cm.)

Collection Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON
Historiana. 1981
Photograph and text
40 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 45 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (103 × 116 cm.)



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON

The Great Poem. 1981

Concrete, swans and steel

$137\frac{1}{16} \times 137\frac{1}{16} \times 59\frac{1}{16}$ " (350 × 350 × 150 cm.)

Collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

Photo: Tom Haartsen



SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON
Mountain. 1980–82
Photograph and text
50³/₈ × 53¹⁵/₁₆" (128 × 137 cm.)

Per Kirkeby

Born 1938 in Copenhagen. Lives in Copenhagen.
Studies at University of Copenhagen 1957–64 (natural sciences). Several geological expeditions. Professor at State Academy of Fine Arts of Karlsruhe since 1978.



ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

Main Library, Copenhagen 1964
Den Fries Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen 1965
Euclid's Room, Gallery Jensen, Copenhagen 1965
Gallery 101, Copenhagen 1967
Jysk Art Gallery, Copenhagen 1969
Fyns Stiftsmuseum, Odense, Denmark 1968
Jysk Art Gallery, Copenhagen 1969
Karlsons Klister I, Daner Gallery, Copenhagen 1972
Gentofte Art Library, Copenhagen 1972
Gallery S:t Petri, Lund, Sweden 1973
Haderslev Museum, Haderslev, Denmark 1974
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne 1974
Karlsons Klister II, Daner Gallery, Copenhagen 1975
Retrospective exhibition—drawings and graphic works, Royal Fine Arts Museum, Copenhagen 1975
Århus Kunstbygning, Århus, Denmark 1975
Gallery Cheap Thrills, Helsinki 1976
Ribe Museum, Ribe, Denmark 1976
Museum Folkwang, Essen 1977
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne 1978
Kunstraum München, Munich 1978
Art Hall, Bern 1979
Galerie Fred Jahn, Munich 1980
Gallery Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam 1980
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne 1980
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne 1982
Painters' Gallery, Helsinki 1982

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

The Experimental Art School, Gallery Admiralgade 20, Copenhagen 1962
Young Danish Art, Den Fries Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen 1965
Artists' Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen 1966
Nordic Youth Biennale, Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark 1966
Tabernacle, Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark 1970
International Events '72–76, Venice Biennale 1976
Arme und Beine, Art Museum, Lucerne 1976
Arms and Legs, Willumsens Museum, Frederikssund, Denmark 1978
Venice Biennale 1980

Après le classicisme, Musée d'Art Saint-Etienne, Saint-Etienne, France 1980
A New Spirit in Painting, Royal Academy of Arts, London 1980
Der Hund stösst im Laufe der Woche zu mir, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1981
Peinture en Allemagne, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels 1981
Studio Marconi, Milan 1982
Documenta, Kassel 1982

FILMS (selection)

Stevns Klint og Mons Klint, Danmark, 1969. TV production, b/w, 16 mm, 40 min. Camera: Thor Adamsen. Music: Henning Christiansen
Grønlandsfilmen I, 1969. Color, 8 mm, 30 min. Music: Henning Christiansen
Og myndighederne sagde stop, 1972. Feature film from Greenland, color, 16 mm, 90 min. Camera: Teit Jørgensen. Sound: Peter Sakse. Cutting: Grete Møldrup. Music: Jens Hendriksen. Production: Per Mannstædt/SFC and DR
Normannerne, 1975. Feature film, color, 35 mm, 90 min. In collaboration with Poul Gernes. Camera: Teit Jørgensen. Sound: Jan Juhler. Equipment: Peter Højmark. Costumes: Jette Termann. Cutting: Maj Soya. Production: Nina Crone/Crone Film.
Asger Jorn, 1977. Color, 16 mm, 60 min. Camera: Teit Jørgensen. Sound: Jan Juhler. Cutting: Grete Møldrup. Production: Vibeke Windeløv/SFC
Geologi — er det egentlig videnskab?, 1980. Color, 16 mm, 45 min. Camera: Teit Jørgensen. Cutting: Grete Møldrup. Production: Vibeke Windeløv/SFC

SFC = Statens Film Central, Denmark

REPRESENTED

Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark
Silkeborg Art Museum, Silkeborg, Denmark
Henie-Onstad Art Center, Høvikodden, Norway
National Art Foundation, Copenhagen
Carlsberg Foundation, Copenhagen
Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Bavarian State Art Galleries, Munich

The trunks

The trunks of big trees. The nethermost stem, from the toes of the roots that bore themselves down into the ground, and a distance up, a distance completely free of branches. A frame, a pillar stump. But both are associations that I derive from my historical interest. But what do they look like, the trunks. I draw them, at times with historical eyes, a consciousness of a history, at other times with a pretence of observation. But the observation also wears historical glasses. There are the molded trees, think of Baldung Grien, Dürer, but already then they too flatten out. When Seghers and Altdorfer set about it, the moss mist seeps upward and lichen and moss steam down. The mood of moisture condenses the trunks flat. The feeling is not molded, the feeling is colors, even in black and white. The large feeling is not able to hold the trunks fast as round pillars. The temple pillars become stage settings against the colored sky. Turner. It is the living brush with color on it. The stylized version is the symbolism, the blank surface designated. I cannot even see that trunks are round when I set out to create the reality with pencil and paper. Faced with the uncertain and dangerous substances which are the surroundings, "the reality," it comes out strokes and tones. Tonalities without molded illusion. And the drawing is the reality. The pictorial art is the reality. Therefore it makes me sick when a picture does not turn out, when it shatters, literally physically sick, for there is no place to be, no reality. It is not there until the picture turns out, then there is peace for a time. Dream, that is the molded trees, those I cannot make into reality, but it is pictures, it is the pictures of the dream. In Prince Valiant, which is dream, the trees are molded, but they are caricatures of the molded trees. They are so big and rugged, so marvelously molded that they have never stood in any painter forest. In most modern comic-strips the tree trunks are merely two strokes. Not the limitation of a symbolistic surface, but hastily jotted markings in a space of mood. The feeling supports the reality. All that outside, that we call trees and all else, is not to be trusted. But it is a substance like color in tubes, to create the reality we live in.

Translated by Susan Hebsgaard



PER KIRKEBY

Plate II. 1981

Oil on canvas

37 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 45 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (95 × 116 cm.)

Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne



PER KIRKEBY

Untitled (Cave). 1981

Oil on canvas

45 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 37 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (116 × 95 cm.)

Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne



PER KIRKEBY

Untitled. 1981

Oil on canvas

$37\frac{3}{8} \times 45\frac{1}{16}$ " (95 × 116 cm.)

Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne



PER KIRKEBY

Untitled (Cave). 1981

Oil on canvas

37 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 45 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (95 × 116 cm.)

Courtesy Galerie Hans Neuendorf, Hamburg



PER KIRKEBY

Plate III. 1981

Oil on canvas

37 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 45 $\frac{11}{16}$ " (95 × 116 cm.)

Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne



PER KIRKEBY

Untitled. 1981

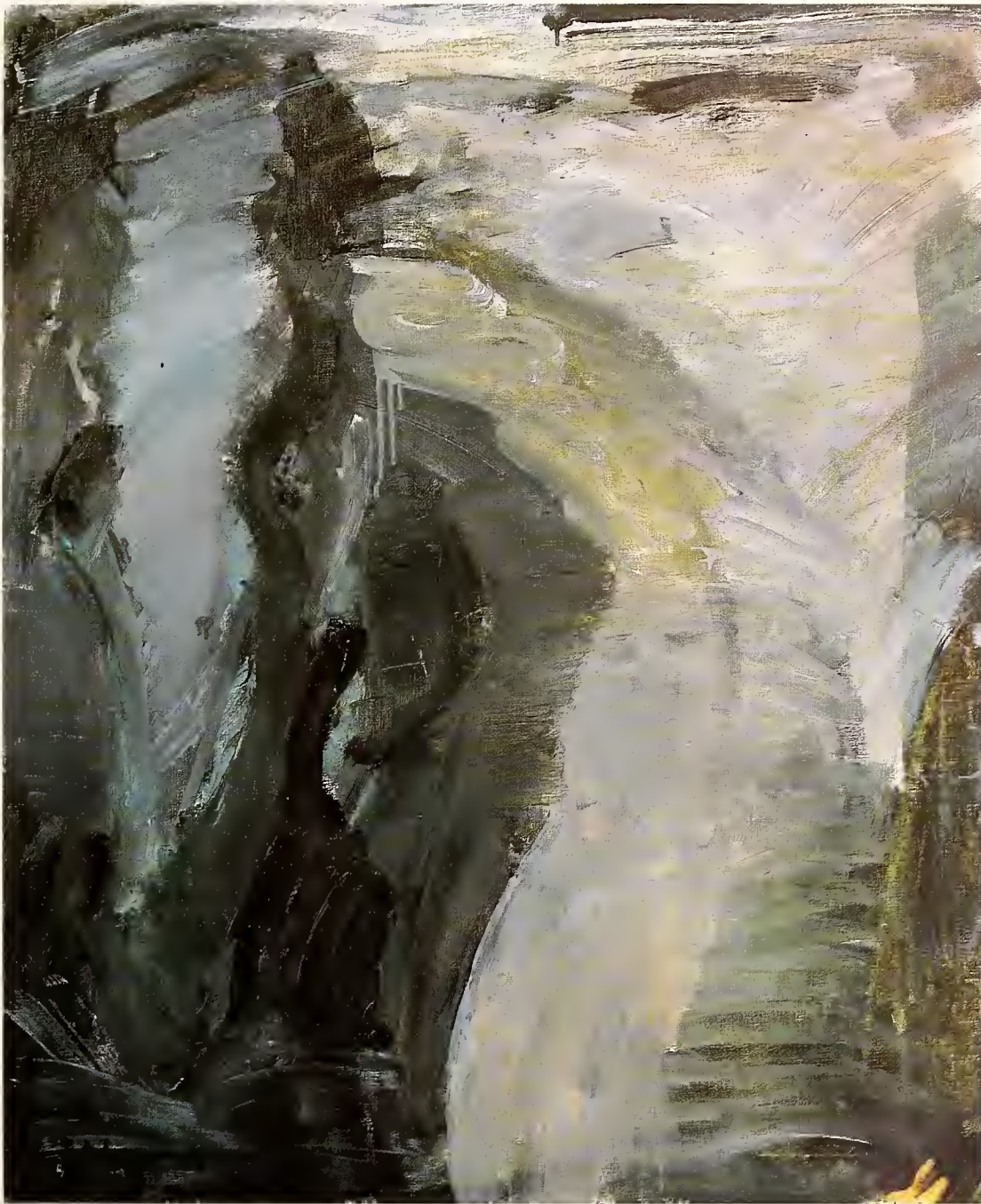
Oil on canvas

45¹/₁₆ × 37³/₈" (116 × 95 cm.)

Courtesy Galerie Hans Neuendorf, Hamburg



PER KIRKEBY
Plate VII. 1981
Oil on canvas
45¹¹/₁₆ × 37³/₈" (116 × 95 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Fred Jahn, Munich



PER KIRKEBY

Untitled (Horse Head). 1981

Oil on canvas

45¹¹/₁₆ × 37³/₈" (116 × 95 cm.)

Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne

Olle Kåks

Born 1941 in Hedemora, Dalecarlia, Sweden. Lives in Stockholm.

Studies at Gerlesborgsskolan, Stockholm 1960–62, and at College of Art in Stockholm 1962–68. Professor at College of Art since 1979.



ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

Obervatorium, Stockholm 1966
Galerie Aronowitsch, Stockholm 1966
Galerie Burén, Stockholm 1969
Galerie Burén, Stockholm 1972
Galerie Belle, Västerås, Sweden 1974
Norrköping Art Museum, Norrköping, Sweden 1974
Gothenburg Art Hall, Gothenburg, Sweden 1974
Skövde Art Hall, Skövde, Sweden 1974
Södermanlands Museum, Nyköping, Sweden 1974
Kalmar Art Museum, Kalmar, Sweden 1974
Nolhaga Castle, Alingsås, Sweden 1974
Varbergs Museum, Varberg, Sweden 1974
Jönköping County Museum, Jönköping, Sweden 1974
Museum of Dalecarlia, Falun, Sweden 1974
Västerbottens Museum, Umeå, Sweden 1974
Galerie Aronowitsch, Stockholm 1975
Galerie Burén, Stockholm 1975
Galerie Burén, Stockholm 1976
Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1977
Kunsthalle, Basel 1978
Lake Superior, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1980
Galerie Olson, Stockholm 1980
Painters' Gallery, Helsinki 1981
Louisiana, Humlebæk, Denmark 1982

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

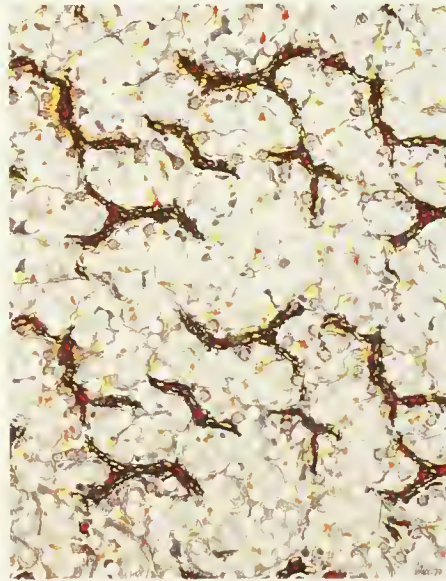
Paris Biennale 1967
17 Young Artists, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm 1967
A Touring Art Exhibition, Sundsvalls Museum, Sundsvall –
Gävle Museum, Gävle – Skånska Art Museum, Lund –
The Museum, Halmstad, Sweden 1967
Op losse schroeven, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1969
Six Swedish Artists, Camden Art Centre, London 1969
Svenskt Alternativ, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1970
Alternative Suédoise, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
1971
Swedish Alternative, Louisiana, Humlebæk, Denmark, Gallery
F 15, Moss and Bergen Picture Gallery, Bergen, Norway 1971
New Swedish Images, Amos Anderson Museum, Helsinki 1973
Images du Nord, Dakar, Senegal 1973
International Events '72–76, Venice Biennale 1976
Swedish Art of the 70', Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1979

REPRESENTED

Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris
Art Museum, Basel
Bergen Picture Gallery, Bergen, Norway
Ateneum, Helsinki

Gunnar Harding

BETWEEN MUSSEL AND MOON BETWEEN
LIFE AND WOMB BETWEEN GOLD AN
D LEAF BETWEEN FLESH AND BL
OOD BETWEEN MARROW AND E
ARTH BETWEEN FUR AND S
TONE BETWEEN BONE AND
THIGH BETWEEN TAR A
ND FEATHER BETWEE
N BIRTH AND
LIGHT



Poimandres

At once all was unfolded to me, and I beheld an immensity in which all was light, and in that light were gentleness and joy, and I was astonished at what I saw. But soon a sort of darkness emerged, drawing downwards in coiling spirals, dismal and menacing, like unto a serpent. Thereafter the darkness was transformed into a running, wet nature, an indescribably whirling water from which vapor was emitted like the smoke from a fire: and from the water rose a groaning cry, a wild and unimaginable shriek that to me sounded like the voice of fire. At the same instant a holy Word was uttered from the light, and the Word covered the whole of Nature; at which a purified flame rose high above the wetness, up towards the place of glory. The fire was light, lively and eager; and the air, also light, followed the ignited gust, rising with the fire from the earth and water, as if suspended to the fire, while the earth and water remained where they had been, so mixed with each other that they were hard to distinguish. All this was set in constant motion by the breath of the Word, which had withdrawn into the heights, distinguishable only to the ear.

from Corpus Hermeticum'
a gnostic codex written around A.D. 200

OLLE KÄKS
Name Object. 1978
Installation view
Kunsthalle Basel
Photo: Christian Baur





OLLE KÅKS

Uprooted. 1979

Oil on canvas mounted on panel,
variable dimensions, approximately $78\frac{3}{4} \times 393\frac{3}{4}$ " ($200 \times 1,000$ cm.)





OLLE KÅKS

Coléopter. 1980

Oil on canvas mounted on panel

103 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 236 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (262 × 616 cm.)

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris





OLLE KÄKS
Market Garden. 1982
Oil on canvas
110¼ × 233⅞" (280 × 594 cm.)
Photo: Jan Almerén



Olli Lyytikäinen

Born 1949 in Heinävesi, Finland. Lives in Helsinki.
Autodidact.
Co-founder of artists' group the Reapers.



Portrait of Olli Lyytikäinen by Kaija Saariaho

ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

Aus die pathologische Schizzenbücher, Gallery Cheap Thrills, Helsinki 1971

From Africa to Eternity, Gallery Cheap Thrills, Helsinki 1973

Galerie Artek, Helsinki 1975

The Pen, the Paper and the Truth, Gallery Cheap Thrills, Helsinki 1976

The Duckburg Art Museum Collection, Galerie Christel, Stockholm 1977

Åbo Art Museum, Åbo, Finland 1977

Galerie Artek, Helsinki 1978

Katariinan Galleria, Helsinki 1979

The Fire of the Old Student House, Old Student House, Helsinki 1980

Bird Nurse, Galleri Engström, Stockholm 1980

Old Student House, Helsinki 1981

A ~ over, Galleri Engström, Stockholm 1981

Galerie Grafiart, Åbo, Finland 1982

Galerie Artek, Helsinki 1982

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

13 Erimieltä, Kluuvin Galleria, Helsinki 1967

Real Lies, Kluuvin Galleria, Helsinki 1970

The Spider, Katariinan Galleria, Helsinki 1972

The Reapers, Katariinan Galleria, Helsinki 1972

The Berlin Festival, Suomi Center, Berlin 1973

A Head Museum for the Eighties, Gallery Cheap Thrills, Helsinki 1974; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Archive for Decorative Art, Lund, Sweden

Kulturmagasinet Vargen, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1975

International Events '72-76, Venice Biennale 1976

Adhesiva Arketyper-Young Finnish Art, Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki 1976

The Drawing Center, New York 1977

7th International Contemporary Art Exhibition, Delhi 1977

Adhesiva Arketyper, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 1977; Nordens Hus, Reykjavik

Finnish Art, Warsaw 1978; Wrocław; Szczecin

1. Internationale Jugend Triennale, Kunsthalle Nürnberg 1979

Five Northerners, Trollhättan, Borås and Gothenburg Art Museums, Sweden 1980

The Rules of the Game, Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki 1981

Moderna Museet Visits Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels 1982

The Drawing Center, New York 1982

Paris Biennale 1982

REPRESENTED

Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Ateneum, Helsinki

Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki

City of Helsinki

How To Be a Detective When Bunny Plays Piano

Every situation has its own language, its own agents of expression. I can't imagine a situation in which nothing is done—or I can, but I know it to be false.

There is no inventor who invents a new wheel—the most radical are those who understand how the wheel works.

If an artist does not realize that he always has these many-thousand-year-old eyes, two feet, and two hands with five fingers—then the door won't open.

Olli Lyytikäinen

When Axel Gallen-Kallela, the strongman of Finnish Golden Age Art, was only nineteen he painted an early masterpiece, *Boy and Crow*. — A very naturalistic scene, showing a young lad, half turned away, looking at a crow picking in the right corner of the composition. Shortly afterwards the artist painted another equally poignant picture, *Old Woman and Cat*. The ugly hag is turned towards us, halfway, looking at the cat in the lower right corner.

These are straightforward images, very Finnish, but also archaic, mirroring deep levels of the mind. The idiom and way of painting is the same in both but the psychic content is reversed. They contain the nucleus of the artist's vision, later to develop into a huge body of dramatic work, including the powerful illustrations to the *Kalevala*, Finland's national epic, a source-book for the Finnish mind.

But the sparks that triggered off Gallen-Kallela's vision are found already in these two images. The first image led to the other; by some psychic necessity it provoked its counterpart. Having painted one side of the human situation, the artist had to paint the other. Through opposing forces like these, his vision unfolds. He is not unique in this, of course, but seldom can the polarity be seen, and confronted, so stalwartly.

Between such polarities, and many many more, Olli Lyytikäinen works his way through a highly personal Odyssey. One should perhaps not compare these two at

all, for Lyytikäinen—the Peter Pan of Finnish art—is, in his own way, almost totally un-Finnish: eccentric and versatile, with a variety of expression, that makes the elder artist seem a bit stuck-up in his role as a national mythmaker. When Olli was nineteen he moved around in the cafés of Helsinki, dressed in an English-style tweed suit, exhibiting peculiar neckties and other emblems of an original life-style, surprising his friends by turning out series of extraordinary drawings, images that seemed to us to come from another state of mind altogether. Strange portraits of imagined beings with real names: “Friedrich Nietzsche” seen as a schoolboy, taking a hesitant step; “Charlotte Corday” as an androgyne angel; “Jean Vigo” hypnotically staring into the spectator and his own mind, and many more.

On some archetypal levels Lyytikäinen seems to move on the same wavelength as Gallen-Kallela, but he is freer, more bizarre, more intense, “hot” and psychic—and thus maybe closer to another Nordic genius, Edvard Munch. The pictures are small in size but with a “high definition,” revealing meanings beyond the dramatically gestural. For some fifteen years he has been drawing forth a continuous stream of personalities—as if from some huge unknown Image Bank in the Lower Manhattan of the Art World's mind. Where they really come from, and where they are going, and what Lord they are serving, really, it is hard to know, but everything is charged with meaning, energy.

Lyytikäinen could not repeat himself, and I doubt whether he could make a “bad” (uninteresting) image, even if he tried. Debasements and regressions just give access to more strange images. He does not hide behind squares or color fields—I don't think he could make an abstract picture. There is all too much anxiety and excitement, polarization and paranoia, hysteria and mystery, that need to be expressed. Idealization and destruction, awe and excitement mingle; every blessing seems to be connected with some cursing. The most longed for is intimately connected with the most feared. “Dogs bark in the basement while church bells ring in the tower.” To handle all this demands unusual resources. The artistry is revealed in the way he manages to bind up and give meaningful life to agonizing energies.

J. O. Mallander



OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
She-Wolf. 1974
 Watercolor and pastel
 11¹³/₁₆ × 15³/₄" (30 × 40 cm.)
 Collection Bo Alveryd, Kävlinge
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo

OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
Three Pyramids and the Sphinx. 1974
 Watercolor and pastel
 22⁷/₁₆ × 31¹/₂" (57 × 80 cm.)
 Collection Launo Laakkonen, Helsinki
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN

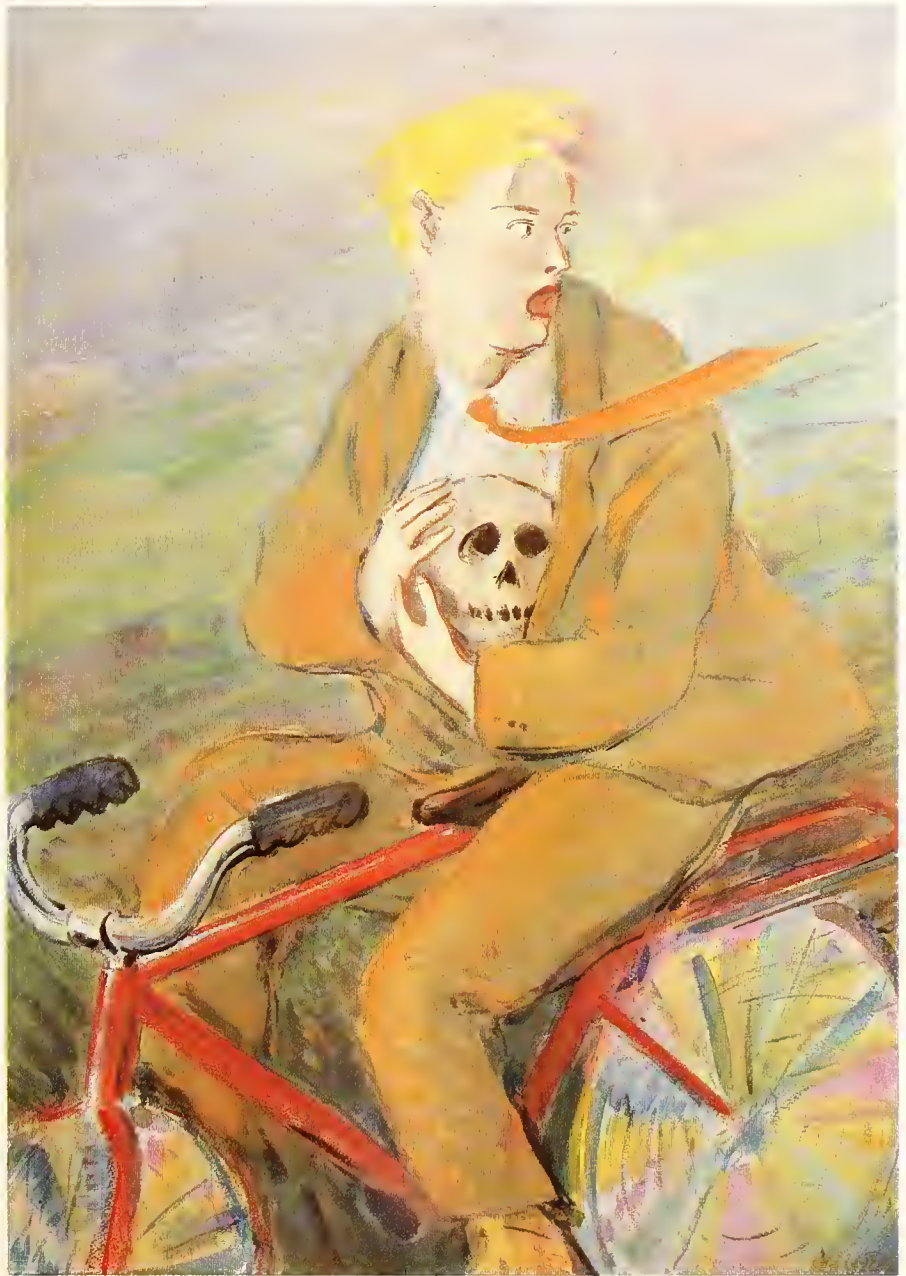
Biking Hamlet. 1976

Watercolor and pastel

29½ × 20½" (75 × 52 cm.)

Collection Stuart Wrede, Connecticut

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN

Noah's Dream. 1978

Watercolor

7½ × 9½" (18 × 23 cm.)

Collection Kirsti Lyytikäinen, Helsinki

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN

Civet Cat. 1978

Watercolor

8¼ × 5⅞" (21 × 15 cm.)

Collection Annmari Arhippainen, Helsinki

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN

Counterpoint. 1977

Watercolor

8⅝ × 11⅓" (22 × 30 cm.)

Private Collection

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN

Sven Duva in Hades. 1975

Watercolor and pastel

9⅞ × 12⅞" (24 × 32 cm.)

Private Collection

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN

The Queen Threatened. 1976

Watercolor and pastel

28¾ × 17⅓" (73 × 45 cm.)

Collection The Art Museum of
the Ateneum, Helsinki

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN
Midsummer Night's Dream. 1977
 Charcoal and wash
 22 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (56 × 75 cm.)
 Collection Sirkka Knuuttila, Helsinki
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo

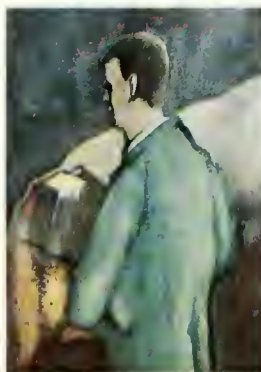


OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN
Grasshopper by a Rainbow. 1981
 Watercolor and India ink
 14 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (36 × 50 cm.)
 Private Collection
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo

OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
**Form and Content —
 Content and Form.** 1977
 Watercolor
 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 24" (46 × 61 cm.)
 Collection Sebastian Savander,
 Helsinki
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
Being of Sound Mind. 1981
 Watercolor and India ink
 11 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (30 × 41 cm.)
 Collection Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
Farewell. 1978
 Watercolor
 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (21 × 15 cm.)
 Private Collection

OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
4-colored Dream. 1978
 Watercolor
 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{13}{16}$ " (22 × 30 cm.)
 Private Collection





OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
**Bunny Plays Bach on an
 Electric Piano.** 1979
 Watercolor, India ink and pastel
 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (36 × 50 cm.)
 Private Collection
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo

OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
**"I was two and I killed the other—now
 I am only one and I am so lonely."** 1981
 Watercolor
 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (30 × 41 cm.)
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKAINEN
Ladies' Bicycle. 1977
 Watercolor
 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (60 × 45 cm.)
 Collection Ulla and Stefan Sjöström,
 Stockholm
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYytiKÄINEN
Fire Chief. 1979
 Watercolor and pastel
 21 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{9}{16}$ " (55 × 37 cm.)
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYytiKÄINEN
The Sphinx's Dream. 1981
 Watercolor and India ink
 14 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (36 × 50 cm.)
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



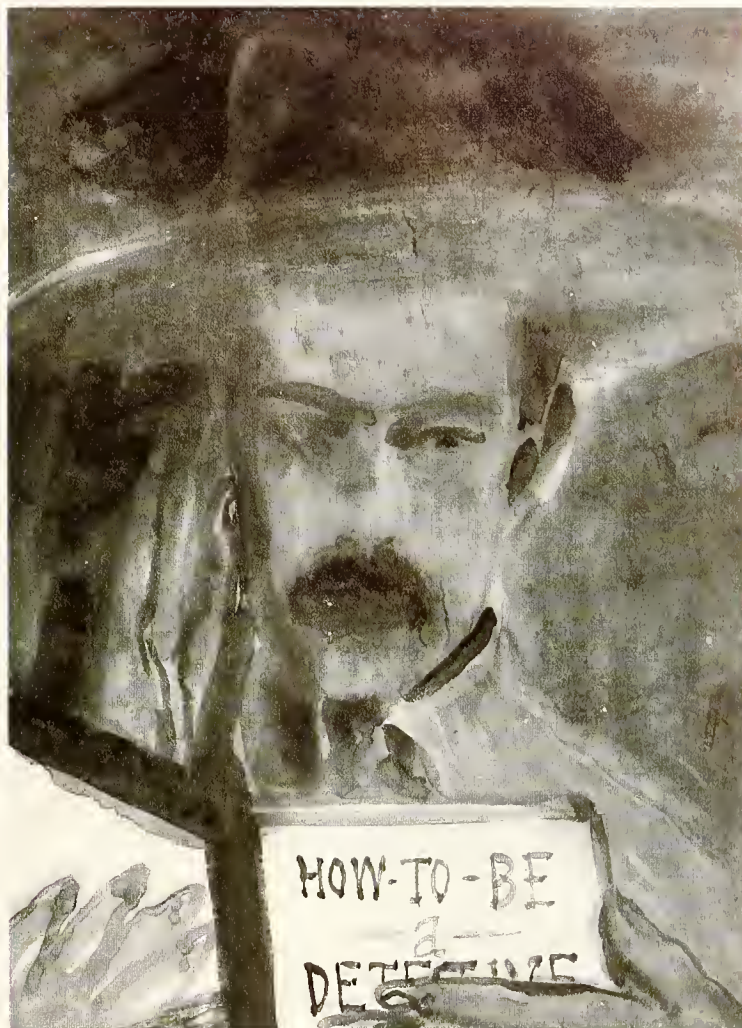
OLLI LYytiKÄINEN
Red Star. 1976
 Watercolor and pastel
 16 $\frac{15}{16}$ × 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (43 × 60 cm.)
 Collection The Art Museum of
 the Ateneum, Helsinki
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN
Vernissage. 1977
 Watercolor
 6 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (16 × 14 cm.)
 Collection Amos Anderson
 Art Museum, Helsinki
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN
Overtaking... 1978
 Watercolor
 9 $\frac{7}{16}$ × 12 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (24 × 32 cm.)
 Collection Helsingin Kaupungin Taidemuseo, Helsinki
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN
How to be a Detective. 1982
 India ink
 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (62 × 45 cm.)
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo



OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN
Love in War. 1981
 Watercolor and India ink
 11 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (30 × 40 cm.)
 Collection Svenska Handelsbanken, Stockholm
 Photo: Seppo Hilpo

Bjørn Nørgaard

Born 1947 in Copenhagen. Lives in Copenhagen. Since 1964 member of The Experimental Art School (EKS-skolen), since 1972 member of the school's print shop Aps, and since 1976 member of group Arme og Ben (Arms and Legs). Has since 1969 collaborated on actions, performances, films, exhibitions etc. with Lene Adler Petersen.

Bjørn Nørgaard would like to thank the following persons and institutions for their generous help: Lene Adler Petersen, Finn Benthin, Herbert Krenchel, Erik Fischer, Flemming Jensen, Agri Contact Inc., The Collective Workshop in Nees, the Danmarks Nationalbank's Anniversary Foundation of 1968 and the New Carlsberg Foundation.

ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

- One has one's bright moments*, Daner Gallery, Copenhagen 1973
Take a cup of coffee, Gallery St. Petri, Lund, Sweden 1975
3 sandwiches and one beer, Daner Gallery, Copenhagen 1975
The fairy-billock Maria's trench, Gallery 38, Copenhagen 1977
Cupola—Obelisk—Sarcophagus, Gallery Svend Hansen, Copenhagen 1978
Copyright HÆTSJJÖ, Department of Prints and Drawings, The Royal Fine Arts Museum, Copenhagen 1981
Kong, Gallery Flindt, Århus, Denmark 1981

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

- The pupils' exhibition, State Academy of Art, Düsseldorf 1967
Young Danish Art Anniversary Exhibition, Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark 1967
Tabernacle, Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark 1970
Lene Adler Petersen, Per Kirkeby and Bjørn Nørgaard, Århus Kunstbygning, Århus, Denmark 1975
Arme und Beine, Art Museum, Lucerne 1976
The Death Leap, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen 1976
Paper (Arms and Legs), Århus Kunstbygning, Århus, Denmark 1977
10th Paris Biennale, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris 1977
Four Young Artists from the North, Henie-Onstad Art Center, Høvikodden; also shown at Kjarvalstadir, Reykjavik; Art Association, Copenhagen 1978
15th Middelheim Biennale, Middelheim Open Air Museum, Antwerp 1979
Danish Art 1969–1979 (Arms and Legs), anniversary exhibition of Tanegården, Gentofte, Denmark 1980
Venice Biennale 1980
The House as a Picture, Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark 1981
13th International Symposium of Sculptors Forma Viva, Portoroz, Yugoslavia 1981



PERFORMANCES, HAPPENINGS, ACTIONS, FESTIVALS ETC.

- Condition*, Trækvogn 13 in cooperation with Joseph Beuys and Bengt af Klintberg, St. Kongensgade 101, Copenhagen 1966
Manresa, in cooperation with Henning Christiansen and Joseph Beuys, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf 1966
Man with plaster feet, Gallery 101, Copenhagen 1966
Concert in Nikolai Church, Henning Christiansen, Hans-Jørgen Nielsen and Johannes Stüttgen. (Eurasienstab homage à Joseph Beuys) Copenhagen 1968
A Lecture on Architecture, performance with Lene Adler Petersen. School of Architecture, Copenhagen 1969
The Naked Female Christ, action with Lene Adler Petersen. The Exchange, Copenhagen 1969
Le Sacre du printemps, actions and films with Lene Adler Petersen. State Academy of Art, Düsseldorf 1969
The Horse Offering, action. Kirke-Hyllinge, Denmark 1970
A Lecture on Architecture II, performance with Lene Adler Petersen. School of Architecture, Copenhagen 1970
Mary Stuart (Schiller), performance with Lene Adler Petersen. Copenhagen and Paris 1977
The Oil-platform homage à John Lennon, with Lene Adler Petersen and pupils of State Art Academy, Oslo 1980
Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare), performance with Lene Adler Petersen and pupils of State Art Academy, Oslo 1980

REPRESENTED

- Kobberstiksamlingen of Royal Fine Arts Museum, Copenhagen
Silkeborg Art Museum, Silkeborg, Denmark
Århus Art Museum, Århus, Denmark
Randers Art Museum, Randers, Denmark
Vejle Art Museum, Vejle, Denmark
North Jutland Arts Museum, Ålborg, Denmark
Henie-Onstad Art Center, Høvikodden, Norway
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Art Museum, Lucerne
Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, West Germany
Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark

The Human Wall

Monumentality must emerge inexorably from within—that is true architecture. No petty-minded judgments of taste, but an architecture arising from needs and dreams, a form filled not by the academic grind but by genuine passion.

The Human Wall is all conceivable walls at once, its various figures are sculptures, pictures and people we meet and see. (The human figure in the history of art, man's interest in man throughout the ages.) And what, deep down, is more interesting than ourselves, the remarkable contradiction between our abnormal interest in ourselves and the happiness we achieve in total self-oblivion.

Architecture and sculpture, the wall and the people.

The Last Supper, with the thirteen men at table, and any gathering of people whatsoever, anywhere. (Earth) (Water) (Air) (Fire) and the smallest unit.

We produce classical art, because we use generally valid themes, the narrative and manifold and visionary image.

The structure of the work of art is a result of the work process. The work process is the result of the social conditions from which or in opposition to which the work of art emerges. A work of art is the dream, transformed into a material. When we produce monumental art today, it is in the desire to alter the conditions of art, and thus also the opportunities in our lives for dreaming.

We will take old images and use them again in a new way and make our own history in a word without history.

The only ultimate property things have is *that they are there*.

Art, in the sixties, acquired a new freedom; quality became character, style became structure, and the stuff of art was broadened to become anything, anywhere, and at any time.

Our task is not to make realistic demands, because we are not politicians.

Our task is to make unreasonable demands, because we are artists. But our unreasonable demands are the most realistic. "I'm always looking for an empty street," says Nam June Paik.

I think that art is always on the lookout for "empty streets," which is to say new areas in which to make art, new ways in which to make it.

The decisive thing for us when we work together is our attitude, a moral responsibility towards the visual image.

The concept of "style" does not exist for us. What others call "personal style" or "historical style" is re-

placed with us by a concept of "raw material," a common title of ownership to both the historical and contemporary images, a free flow of information, ideas, conceptions, inventions and dreams between people, across all frontiers.

This presupposes that we should start thinking in a new way, organize ourselves in a new way, that all of us should be able to participate in the decision-making processes, that all of us should take responsibility for the decisions, and that all of us should be able to use our fantasy and creative capacity wherever we happen to live.

To live is to work. Who is the employer of art? Who is anyone's employer? Art defines its own working situation, its materials—in our society one confounds solidarity with institutions and organization with hierarchy. Artists identify themselves with common artistic visions and organize themselves into groups in connection with exhibitions, festivals, workshops, political parties and God knows what else in order to fulfill these common visions. Just as during the past decade we have seen people organize themselves freely in a common solidarity around new alternative colleges, residents-groups, environmental groups, new parties, working-environments, local newspapers, culture centers . . . it is a social model where everyone is creative. We do not make art according to the conditions of the present society, but in defiance of those conditions which our society presents us with.

Art has no other justification than its own presence. Its only *raison d'être* is that we are a group of people who insist that there ought to be a place for it, and its only standard of quality is its ability to destroy the established order and create images of an as yet non-existent world. Art must be impressive, social, beautiful, simple, classical, manifold, entertaining, amusing, funny, expressive, realistic, visionary, human, sublime, monumental, committed, ugly, direct . . .

We dreamed, in the sixties, of abolishing the physical presence of art. Art was to be an idea that could enter any kind of context, and function there. And in the seventies we produced decorative art, and negotiated—with God and man alike. Today such optimism is difficult. The visual image is now returning to the canvas, where the conditions for dreams and conceptions are more favorable. Municipal authorities are more difficult to work with. The "New" painting, or whatever we like to call it, is an impatient but graceful gesture.

When I was small I went about a lot with my grandfather, who was almost blind, and when I had difficulty in explaining something I would take his great hand and draw with my little finger on his palm.



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Pouring of plaster. 1967

BJØRN NØRGAARD
Sculptural Demonstrations I. 1966
Action with the feet.
Galerie 101, Copenhagen and Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf
Photo: Rainer Ruthenbeck



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Lecture on Architecture. 1969
With Lene Adler Petersen
Held in Copenhagen and in
Düsseldorf
Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Chr. III Mausoleum. 1975
 Marble, wood, concrete, plaster, granite,
 cloth, string, acrylic, brass and iron
 86 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (220 cm.) high
 Collection Århus Art Museum, Denmark



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Grave Hill III. 1975
 Granite, marble, copper, glass, wood,
 acrylic, cloth and plaster
 64 $\frac{15}{16}$ " (165 cm.) high
 Collection Silkeborg Art Museum, Denmark



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Cupola. 1978
 Copper, plaster, wood, concrete, marble,
 iron and glass
 66 $\frac{15}{16}$ " (170 cm.) high
 Collection Århus Art Museum, Denmark



BJØRN NØRGAARD
The Spiral. 1980
 Steel, acrylic, iron, plaster, granite,
 bronze and wood, 86 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (220 cm.) high
 Collection Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk,
 Denmark



BJØRN NØRGAARD
The Dream Castle. 1979
 295 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (750 cm.) high
 Middelheim Biennale, Antwerp, Belgium
 and North Jutland Arts Museum,
 Ålborg, Denmark

BJØRN NØRGAARD
The Man on the Temple. 1980–81 ▶
 Bronze, concrete, steel and glass
 157 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (400 cm.) high
 Venice Biennale 1980
 Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm
 Photo: Jan Almerén

BJØRN NØRGAARD
**The Portrait Busts of
 Thorvaldsen.** 1976
 Exhibition *Arms and Legs 1*
 Art Museum, Lucerne







BJØRN NØRGAARD
Cornice Figure. 1978–81
 Fiber-reinforced concrete
 94¼" (240 cm) high
 Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen
 Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Gate. 1978–81
 Concrete, marble, bronze and wood
 216¼" (600 cm.) high
 Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen
 Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Spiral. 1978–81
 Corten steel
 69½" (176 cm.) high
 Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen
 Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Cave. 1978–81
 Glazed ceramic
 86 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (220 cm.) high
 Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen
 Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD

Tower. 1978–81

Wood, steel and copper

610 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (1,550 cm.) high

Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen

Photo: Gregers Nielsen

Pyramid. 1978–81

Concrete, aluminium and glass

275 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (700 cm.) high

Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen

Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD

**Concrete Foundation with Painted
Pillars.** 1978–81

Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen

Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD

Painted Concrete Pillars. 1978–81

98 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (250 cm.) high

Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen

Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD

Bronze Figures. 1978–81

Life size

Collection Gladsaxe Main Library, Copenhagen

Photo: Gregers Nielsen



BJØRN NØRGAARD
The Temple of Change. 1981
 Painted marble
 177 $\frac{3}{16}$ " (450 cm.) high
 Portoroz, Yugoslavia



BJØRN NØRGAARD
Fountain. 1981
 Glazed stoneware
 55 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (140 cm.) high



BJØRN NØRGAARD
The Last Supper. 1981
 Glazed stoneware
 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (80 cm.) high

Paul Osipow

Born 1939 in Kymi, Finland. Lives in Järvenpää. Studies at The School of the Art Academy of Finland 1958–62, The Free Art School, Helsinki 1960 and at University of Texas, Austin 1975. Since 1978 Professor at The School of the Art Academy of Finland.



ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

Gröna Paletten, Stockholm 1965
Museum of Central Finland, Jyväskylä, Finland 1966
Helsinki City Gallery, Helsinki 1969
Ässä Gallery, Helsinki 1973
Printmakers' Gallery, Helsinki 1974
Helsinki City Gallery, Helsinki 1975
Painters' Gallery, Helsinki 1977
Galleriet, Lund, Sweden 1979
Galerie Aronowitsch, Stockholm 1980
Gallery Sculptor, Helsinki 1981
Galerie Artek, Helsinki 1981
Galleriet, Lund, Sweden 1982

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

50th Anniversary of Independence of Finland, Hungary, Poland 1966–67
Scandinavian Art, Stockholm 1967
Kunst aus Finnland, Kunsthalle, Kiel, West Germany 1969
Constructivism, Helsinki 1973
4 Konstruktivisten aus Finnland, Wuppertal, West Germany 1976

12 Artists, Helsinki 1977–78

Finnish Constructivism, University Art Museum, Austin, Texas 1979; also shown at Ringling Art Museum, Sarasota, Florida 1979 and De Cordova Museum, Lincoln, Mass. 1980

Form and Structure, Vienna, Budapest, Madrid 1980

Konstruktivismus aus Finnland, Winterthur, Switzerland 1981

First Sapporo Triennale, Sapporo, Japan 1981

REPRESENTED

Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Ateneum, Helsinki
Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki
Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere, Finland
Turku Art Museum, Turku, Finland
Collection of the State of Finland
Maire Gullichsen Museum, Pori, Finland
Simo Kuntsi's Collection, Vasa, Finland
Helsinki City Collection
Kunsthalle, Rostock, East Germany
The National Arts Council, Sweden

By the means, and the effect, of color, you can
lend interest to the most commonplace things, and
make a masterpiece from a bowl, and some fruit.
But how is this to be achieved? You search, you
erase, you rub, you glaze, you repaint, and when
you've captured the "something" that pleases you
so much, the Picture is complete.

Jean-Baptiste Simeon Chardin

La peinture, c'est comme la merde; ça se sent, ça ne
s'explique pas.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

In the twilight glow I see her
Blue eyes cryin' in the rain
When we kissed goodbye and parted
I knew we'd never meet again

Love is like a dyin' ember
And only memories remain
Through the ages I'll remember
Blue eyes cryin' in the rain

Someday when we meet up yonder
We'll stroll hand in hand again
In a land that knows no parting
Blue eyes cryin' in the rain

Fred Rose

STRUCTURE WITHOUT LIFE IS DEAD.
BUT LIFE WITHOUT STRUCTURE IS
UN-SEEN.

John Cage
"Lecture on nothing"



PAUL OSIPOW

Untitled. (Red-Hooker's Green). 1982

Acrylic on canvas mounted on board

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



PAUL OSIPOW

Untitled. (Blue-Hooker's Green on Red). 1982

Acrylic on canvas mounted on board

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ (150 × 75 cm.)

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



PAUL OSIPOW

Untitled. (Red-Green/Blue). 1982

Acrylic on canvas mounted on board

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



PAUL OSIPOW

Untitled. (Green-Blue). 1982

Acrylic on canvas mounted on board

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



PAUL OSIPOW

Untitled. (Blue—Red on Black). 1982

Acrylic on canvas mounted on board

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)

Photo: Seppo Hilpo



PAUL OSIPOW

Untitled. (Ochre/Gray—Red). 1982

Acrylic on canvas mounted on board

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)

Photo: Seppo Hilpo

Arvid Pettersen

Born 1943 in Bergen, Norway. Lives in Oslo.
Studies at Bergen College of Art and Crafts 1964–67.
Member of artists' group LYN (Flash) 1975–80. Guest
professor at Art Academy of Bergen and Art School of
Trondheim since 1977.



ONE MAN SHOWS (selection)

Gallery 1, Bergen 1970
Stavanger Art Gallery, Stavanger, Norway 1970
Trondheim Art Society, Trondheim, Norway 1971
Tonsberg Art Association, Tonsberg, Norway 1971
Bergen Art Association 1972
UKS, Oslo 1973
Larvik Art Association, Larvik, Norway 1974
Oslo Art Association, Oslo 1975
Gallery 1, Bergen 1975
Stavanger Art Gallery, Stavanger, Norway 1979
Gallery K, Oslo 1980
Bergen Art Association, Bergen 1980
Trondheim Art Association, Trondheim, Norway 1981

GROUP SHOWS (selection)

Bellevue–Bellevue, Oslo Art Association 1972
Galeria Nova, Barcelona 1972
Nordic Pavilion, Venice Biennale 1976

Eye to Eye, Liljevalchs Art Hall, Stockholm 1976
Art Landscape–Landscape Art, Henie-Onstad Art Center,
Hovikodden, Norway 1978
The Lyn Group Show, Bergen Art Association 1979
The Lyn Group Show, Henie-Onstad Art Center, Hovikod-
den, Norway 1980
The Artists' House, Oslo 1981

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

Bergen University 1977
Laxevaag Crafts School (in cooperation with Bård Breivik),
Laxevaag, Norway 1978
Wall for the Social Ministry, Oslo 1982

REPRESENTED

Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo
Bergen Picture Gallery
Stavanger Faste Gallery, Stavanger, Norway
Norwegian Arts Council, Oslo

Gangrene

In September 1980 I opened an exhibition at the Trondheim Art Society with twenty-eight paintings (acrylic, oils, tempera and offset) and nine transformed objects (a board from a rowing boat, rooftiles, demolition material from the conversion of my studio, a protective metal plate, and a doormat from the Art Gallery, which served for the following three weeks to wipe the dust and antiquated conceptions from people's eyes). All objects with a visual potential, and mounted in such a way as to comprise an esthetic whole without any formal modifications on my part. I also exhibited some forty pencil sketches and twenty acrylic sketches, mounted edge to edge in the fourth, and smallest, exhibition room.

The paintings were mainly simple still lifes and interiors of a fairly large format, and with painterly references to the entirely specific Nordic variant on late French Impressionism. Some of the paintings contained pseudo-primitive masks. Four hung free without stretchers, and were painted partly in a primitive, abstract style—as symbols and patterns on stretched hides. One was a combination of offset and oil painting, based on a photo of Jerry Lewis, hung-over in his touring aircraft. The drawings and sketches described details and situations from everyday life.

For me this exhibition, with its large range, and its juxtaposition of paintings, fragments, sketches and ready-mades, was a fairly tough confrontation with the tradition from which I had drawn visual nutrition, and I realized that I had somehow or another to revitalize my relationship towards it. Otherwise, I should have to stop making pictures.

It was like discovering that I was suffering from gangrene. I have taught periodically as a guest lecturer at the Trondheim Academy of Art, and I was asked by the teachers there to produce the occasional work in collaboration with the school. We agreed on three hours instruction in drawing, but with a view always to confronting the teaching regularly provided at the school. The principle, in other words, of tactical confusion.

As if in a carefully synchronized play of events, I arrived at the school at precisely the same moment as two young women students, who have as strong a relationship with Punk/Provo as I had to the "Nordic variant of late French Impressionism." They had punked themselves into the Cooperative Slaughterhouse in Trondheim, got by the Securitas guard (on the

pretext that they wanted to buy wool), and were returning to the Academy just as I arrived. They had with them two skeletons of goats, five flayed cowhides and seven sheep's heads. All these had been slaughtered that same morning. I was permitted to borrow the two goat's skeletons, and thus had a chance to apply the human whirlwind principle in a three-hour-long compressed lesson in drawing, on the basis of two bloody cadavers of goats. At the same time, the two students set out the five skins and seven chopped-off sheep's heads in various rhythmic patterns on grey paper out in the yard (c. 2×8 meters). A steaming séance was there enacted, flanked by wide-eyed first-year students and teachers, and not without a certain amount of blood-dripping ballistics. The flayed cowhides flew through the air, before delineating with a wet thud the soft forms that gravitation for the moment dictated. The sections cut in the sheep's skulls just behind the ears, the raw smell of slaughter, the trancelike motions of the two women, the confrontation with something as close to life as death, and the sensitivity of the organic material in relation to time—all this led me to experience the entire act in clear relationship to my own exhibition.

One of the sheep's heads described a broad, gliding z-movement, and came to rest on its chopped-off surface, turned heavenwards in a bloody calligraphic character. This was something of the most beautiful, most poetically charged experiences I have ever had.

Back in Oslo I began to ponder over what had happened in Trondheim. The encounter with my own exhibition, and the event that took place at the Academy I began to think about the heavily burdened tradition of painting, the eternally dictated form of the canvas and stretcher, and so on. An incessant tomfoolery with tricks to create illusions, and technically fixated processes The value of what I was doing in relation to the economic dictates of the market, and my communication of thoughts, ideas and visual possibilities I had been referring to visual traditions, and had seen myself in a natural extrapolation of these.

I had to break this dependence, otherwise I would find myself in an utterly locked relationship to the job of producing pictures. Until that time I had painted objects: now I had to try to transfer my pictures to real objects. The concrete canvas, the surface or the thing, without the illusory

pictorial world, but with the colors as a cover, indicating a visual play and a painterly tradition.

Gradually, I began to envisage solutions in which the pictures were cut from their frames, and divided up into different geometric forms. Might they then emerge as "objects" with an entirely different "charge" than they had had before?

We set about it in the middle of the exhibition period. Some of the students from the Academy came along, both to assist and to take photographs throughout the process. Fourteen paintings were cut out and pinned back into place. Some of them with solutions defined in advance, while others were more or less "caught in the act." Some pictures were indifferent after they had been cut, while others were charged with a new energy that delighted me. The reactions of the public and my colleagues also suggested that the specific field in which painting operates had really been broadened. The knife cut into a tradition that people experienced both mentally and physically, and for a while the temperature was superbly high.

I had sawn off the branch on which I had been sitting, and I experienced the sense of freedom that arises when you are in free flight, and uncertain where you are going to land: you simply enjoy the flight. This was the first link in a long chain of possibilities.

When I used a knife, I could just as well have resorted to a hammer, an axe, a plane, electronics or gunpowder. The possibilities of combining conventional painting with any other materials and techniques whatsoever I felt to be legion. I had acknowledged my debt to tradition, and I knew that I had to run the entire gauntlet in order to pay it back. Otherwise I should only be able in the future to *function* traditionally, and that is far from being part of the duties of a visual artist.

A journey to Tassiliij n'Ajjer in the heart of the Sahara desert at the turn of the year 1981/82, to see the historic rock paintings (between 4,000 and 6,000 years old), confirmed anew the sense of seeing oneself as part of an infinite process of visual communication.

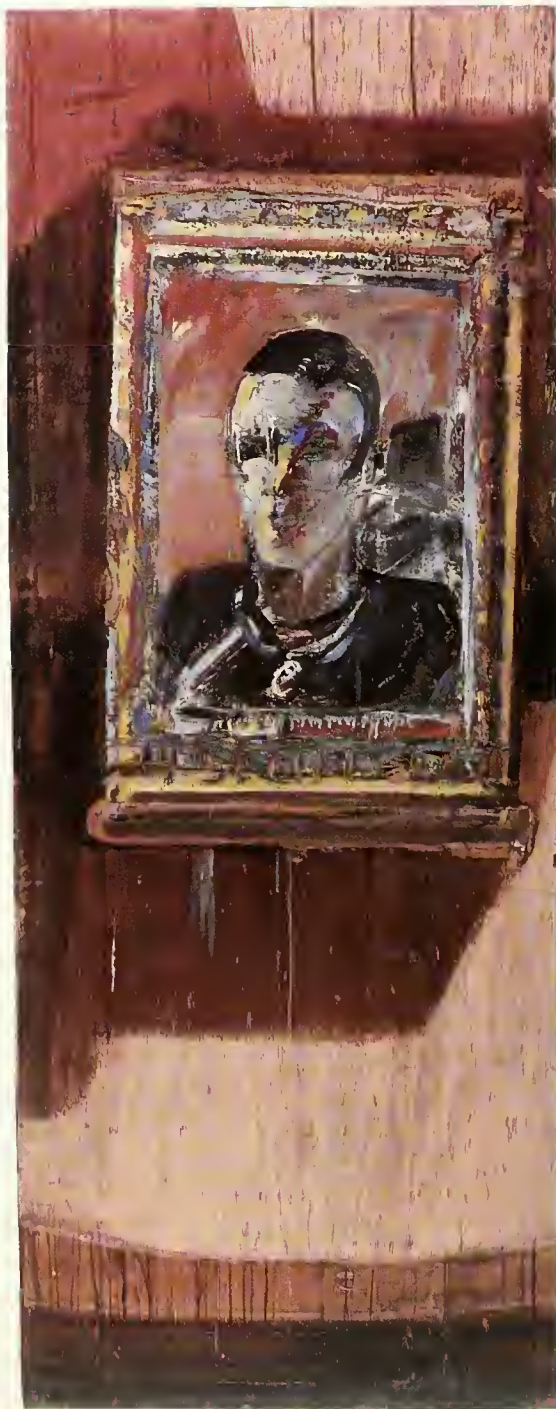
Anachronistically enough, my most recent pictures are more firmly tied to the tradition than previously: the difference is simply that I am now working with open doors.



ARVID PETTERSEN
Mantelpiece. 1981
Oil on canvas
49 $\frac{5}{8}$ \times 43 $\frac{5}{16}$ " (126 \times 110 cm.)
Photo: Tore Rønneland



ARVID PETTERSEN
Ancestor. 1981
Oil on canvas
66¹⁵/₁₆ × 39³/₈" (170 × 100 cm.)
Photo: Tore Rønneland



ARVID PETTERSEN

Interior with Painting. 1982

Tempera and oil on board

79¼ × 29½" (200 × 76 cm.)

Det Faste Galleri, Trondheim

Photo: Tore Rønneland



ARVID PETTERSEN

Portrait. 1982

Tempera on board and paper
77⁹/₁₆ × 29¹³/₁₆" (197 × 76 cm.)

Courtesy Galleri K., Oslo

Photo: Tore Rønneland



ARVID PETTERSEN
Book and Knife. 1981
Oil on canvas
69¹¹/₁₆ × 85¹³/₁₆" (177 × 218 cm.)
Photo: Tore Rønneland



ARVID PETTERSEN

Masks. 1981

Acrylic on paper and canvas

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 35 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (150 × 89 cm.)

Collection Den norske Creditbank, Oslo

Photo: O. Væring

Checklist of the exhibition

All works not otherwise noted are lent by the artist

BÅRD BREIVIK

1. **Untitled I.** 1982
Hazel wood
83 × 14 × 14" (210 × 36 × 36 cm.)
2. **Untitled II.** 1982
Steel (forged)
83 × 14 × 14" (210 × 36 × 36 cm.)
3. **Untitled III.** 1982
Steel ($\frac{7}{16}$ "–8 mm.)
83 × 14 × 9½" (210 × 36 × 24 cm.)
4. **Untitled IV.** 1982
Laminated wood and zinc
83 × 14 × 9½" (210 × 36 × 24 cm.)
5. **Untitled V.** 1982
Mixed media
83 × 14 × 8¼" (210 × 36 × 21 cm.)
6. **Untitled VI.** 1982
Mixed media
83 × 14 × 8¼" (210 × 36 × 21 cm.)
7. **Untitled VII.** 1982
 - a) Black rubber
83 × 14 × 7⅛" (210 × 36 × 18 cm.)
 - b) Vulcan rubber
83 × 14 × 7⅛" (210 × 36 × 18 cm.)
8. **Untitled VIII.** 1982
Lead
83 × 14 × 7⅛" (210 × 36 × 20 cm.)
9. **Untitled IX.** 1982
Mixed media
83 × 14 × 8¼" (210 × 36 × 21 cm.)

LARS ENGLUND

10. **Relative I.** 1982
Graphitefibre
approximately 393 × 236 × 236"
(1,000 × 600 × 600 cm.)
11. **Relative II.** 1982
Kevlar
approximately 120 × 120 × 120"
(300 × 300 × 300 cm.)

HREINN FRIDFINNSSON

12. **Seven Times.** 1978–79
Photograph
31½ × 47¼" (80 × 120 cm.)
State-Owned Art Collections
Department, The Netherlands
13. **A While.** 1978–79
Three panels, photograph, watercolor
and wood-carving
23⅝ × 47¼" (60 × 120 cm.)
14. **Couplet.** 1978–79
Four panels, photograph, watercolor
and wood-carving
39⅝ × 47¼" (100 × 120 cm.)
15. **The Hour.** 1980
One piece on wall, wood-carving
49¼ × 74⅓" (125 × 190 cm.)
One piece on floor, marble, wood,
gold and silver
53⅓ × 74⅓" (135 × 190 cm.)
Collection the City of Amsterdam
16. **Territory.** 1982
Photograph and chalk on paper
59⅓ × 59⅓" (150 × 150 cm.)
Collection the City of Amsterdam
17. **From Time To Time.** 1978–79
Six panels, photograph and text
27⅞ × 63" (70 × 160 cm.)
18. **Serenata.** 1982
Photograph, glass and wood
63 × 102⅝" (160 × 260 cm.)

SIGURDUR GUDMUNDSSON

19. **Rendez-vous.** 1976
Photograph and text on cardboard
28⅞ × 35⅞" (72.5 × 91 cm.)
Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm
20. **Molecule.** 1979
Color photograph with text
51⅓ × 59⅓" (130 × 150 cm.)
Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo,
The Netherlands

21. **The Katanes Beast.** 1981
Drawing
47¼ × 74⅜" (120 × 189 cm.)
22. **Untitled Black Sculpture.** 1981
Tar on wood and glass
137⅓/16 × 279/16 × 279/16"
(350 × 70 × 70 cm.)
23. **Mathematics.** 1979
Color photograph with text
45¼ × 50⅜" (115 × 128 cm.)
Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo,
The Netherlands
24. **Historiana.** 1981
Photograph with text
409/16 × 4511/16" (103 × 116 cm.)
25. **The Great Poem.** 1981
Concrete, swans and steel
13713/16 × 13713/16 × 591/16"
(350 × 350 × 150 cm.)
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
26. **Mountain.** 1980–82
Photograph with text
50⅝ × 5315/16" (128 × 137 cm.)

PER KIRKEBY

27. **Plate II.** 1981
Oil on canvas
37⅜ × 4511/16" (95 × 116 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner,
Cologne
28. **Untitled (Cave).** 1981
Oil on canvas
4511/16 × 37⅜" (116 × 95 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner,
Cologne
29. **Untitled.** 1981
Oil on canvas
37⅜ × 4511/16" (95 × 116 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner,
Cologne
30. **Untitled (Cave).** 1981
Oil on canvas
37⅜ × 4511/16" (95 × 116 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Hans Neuendorf,
Hamburg
31. **Plate III.** 1981
Oil on canvas
37⅜ × 4511/16" (95 × 116 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner,
Cologne

32. **Untitled.** 1981
Oil on canvas
4511/16 × 37⅜" (116 × 95 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Hans Neuendorf,
Hamburg
33. **Plate VII.** 1981
Oil on canvas
4511/16 × 37⅜" (116 × 95 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Fred Jahn, Munich
34. **Untitled (Horse Head).** 1981
Oil on canvas
4511/16 × 37⅜" (116 × 95 cm.)
Courtesy Galerie Michael Werner,
Cologne

OLLE KÅKS

35. **Uprooted.** 1979
Oil on canvas mounted on panel
variable size, approximately
78¾ × 393¾" (200 × 1,000 cm.)
36. **Coléopter.** 1980
Oil on canvas mounted on panel
103⅓ × 236¼" (262 × 616 cm.)
Musée National d'Art Moderne,
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
37. **Market Garden.** 1982
Oil on canvas
110¼ × 2337/8" (280 × 594 cm.)

OLLI LYYTIKÄINEN

38. **She-Wolf.** 1974
Watercolor and pastel
1113/16 × 15¾" (30 × 40 cm.)
Collection Bo Alveryd, Kävlinge
39. **Three Pyramids and the Sphinx.**
1974
Watercolor and pastel
227/16 × 31½" (57 × 80 cm.)
Collection Launo Laakkonen, Helsinki
40. **Biking Hamlet.** 1976
Watercolor and pastel
29½ × 20½" (75 × 52 cm.)
Collection Stuart Wrede, Connecticut
41. **Noah's Dream.** 1978
Watercolor
71/16 × 91/16" (18 × 23 cm.)
Collection Kirsti Lyytikäinen, Helsinki

42. **Counterpoint.** 1977
Watercolor
8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{13}{16}$ " (22 × 30 cm.)
Private Collection
 43. **Sven Duva in Hades.** 1975
Watercolor and pastel
9 $\frac{7}{16}$ × 12 $\frac{9}{16}$ " (24 × 32 cm.)
Private Collection
 44. **The Queen Threatened.** 1976
Watercolor and pastel
28 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 17 $\frac{11}{16}$ " (73 × 45 cm.)
Collection Ateneum Art Museum,
Helsinki
 45. **Midsummer Night's Dream.** 1977
Charcoal and wash
22 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (56 × 75 cm.)
Collection Sirkka Knuuttila, Helsinki
 46. **Grasshopper by a Rainbow.** 1981
Watercolor and India ink
14 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 19 $\frac{11}{16}$ " (36 × 50 cm.)
Private Collection
 47. **Form and Content – Content
and Form.** 1977
Watercolor
18 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 24" (46 × 61 cm.)
Collection Sebastian Savander,
Helsinki
 48. **Being of Sound Mind.** 1981
Watercolor and India ink
11 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (30 × 41 cm.)
Collection Amos Anderson
Art Museum, Helsinki
 49. **Farewell.** 1978
Watercolor
8 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (21 × 15 cm.)
Private Collection
 50. **4-colored Dream.** 1978
Watercolor
8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{13}{16}$ " (22 × 30 cm.)
Private Collection
 51. **Bunny Plays Bach on an Electric
Piano.** 1979
Watercolor, India ink and pastel
14 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 19 $\frac{11}{16}$ " (36 × 50 cm.)
Private Collection
 52. **"I was two and I killed the other–
now I am only one and I am so
lonely."** 1981
Watercolor
11 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (30 × 41 cm.)
 53. **Ladies' Bicycle.** 1977
Watercolor
23 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{11}{16}$ " (60 × 45 cm.)
Collection Ulla and Stefan Sjöström,
Stockholm
 54. **Fire Chief.** 1979
Watercolor and pastel
21 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{9}{16}$ " (55 × 37 cm.)
 55. **The Sphinx's Dream.** 1981
Watercolor and India ink
14 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 19 $\frac{11}{16}$ " (36 × 50 cm.)
 56. **Red Star.** 1976
Watercolor and pastel
16 $\frac{15}{16}$ × 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (43 × 60 cm.)
Collection Ateneum Art Museum,
Helsinki
 57. **Vernissage.** 1977
Watercolor
6 $\frac{5}{16}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (16 × 14 cm.)
Collection Amos Anderson
Art Museum, Helsinki
 58. **Overtaking...** 1978
Watercolor
9 $\frac{7}{16}$ × 12 $\frac{9}{16}$ " (24 × 32 cm.)
Collection Helsingin Kaupungin
Taidemuseo, Helsinki
 59. **How to be a Detective.** 1982
India ink
24 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{11}{16}$ " (62 × 45 cm.)
 60. **Love in War.** 1981
Watercolor and India ink
11 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (30 × 40 cm.)
Collection Svenska Handelsbanken,
Stockholm
- BJØRN NØRGAARD**
61. **The Human Wall.** 1982
Ceramic, concrete, wood, stone,
and bronze
approximately 45 × 15 × 90'
(15 × 5 × 30 meters)
- PAUL OSIPOW**
62. **Untitled. (Red-Hooker's Green).**
1982
Acrylic on canvas mounted on board
59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)

63. **Untitled. (Blue-Hooker's Green on Red).** 1982
Acrylic on canvas mounted on board
59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)
64. **Untitled. (Red-Green/Blue).** 1982
Acrylic on canvas mounted on board
59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)
65. **Untitled. (Green-Blue).** 1982
Acrylic on canvas mounted on board
59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)
66. **Untitled. (Blue-Red on Black).** 1982
Acrylic on canvas mounted on board
59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)
67. **Untitled. Ochre/Gray-Red).** 1982
Acrylic on canvas mounted on board
59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (150 × 75 cm.)

ARVID PETTERSEN

68. **Mantelpiece.** 1981
Oil on canvas
49 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 43 $\frac{5}{16}$ " (126 × 110 cm.)
69. **Ancestor.** 1981
Oil on canvas
66 $\frac{15}{16}$ × 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (170 × 100 cm.)
70. **Interior with Painting.** 1982
Tempera and oil on board
79 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 29 $\frac{15}{16}$ " (200 × 76 cm.)
Det Faste Galleri, Trondheim
71. **Portrait.** 1982
Tempera on board and paper
77 $\frac{9}{16}$ × 29 $\frac{15}{16}$ " (197 × 76 cm.)
Courtesy Galleri K., Oslo
72. **Book and Knife.** 1981
Oil on canvas
69 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 85 $\frac{13}{16}$ " (177 × 218 cm.)
73. **Masks.** 1981
Acrylic on paper and canvas
59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 35 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (150 × 89 cm.)
Collection Den norske Creditbank, Oslo

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Öyvind Fahlström



Cover: Detail of **Sitting** 1962

Tempera on paper mounted on canvas, $62\frac{5}{8} \times 79\frac{1}{8}$ " (159 × 201 cm.)

Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Öyvind Fahlström

The search to create a fusion of insight and pleasure.
To formulate the terrifying shortness of life and the
terrible shortcomings in a world where we struggle
to experience and to create happiness.

Ö.F.

Öyvind Fahlström

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

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NUNSKU was founded in 1965 and is the Swedish government's official body dealing with the exhibition of contemporary Swedish art abroad. NUNSKU is an independent institution, and its Executive Member is the director of Moderna Museet. Its chairman is appointed by the government for a term of two years. So far, all its Chairmen have been practising artists. The director of the National Swedish Art Museums is an *ex officio* member. The Board's other members are painters, sculptors, graphic artists, architects, art critics, and representatives of the Swedish Institute and the Swedish Travelling Exhibitions, all appointed by the government.

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Thomas M. Messer

Director

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Winnie-the-Pooh for UN Secretary!

Olle Granath

There was something of the prophet about Öyvind Fahlström. His paintings, articles, plays, films and manifestos were like stones splashing down on to the surface of time, and one could sit years afterwards watching the ripples still spreading. But he differed from the prophets of old in that there was little of the mystic or ecstatic about him. He often spoke or wrote of "ecstatic communities," "satori experiences" and drug trips. But when he himself was trying to describe the world in which he, for better or for worse, had been placed, he set to work with a more sober passion. He collected facts with a mind open equally to broad essentials and to the trivial, the odd and the bizarre.

Fahlström could probably have been one of the most successful journalists of his generation, in all media: "I see myself as a witness rather than as an educator." But journalism forced him into simplifications, necessitated by the superficial presentation of facts, and with these he could not be satisfied: "As a witness, I have become increasingly absorbed by the emotional significance in many of the facts and events in the world."

Towards the end of the fifties he lived for a while in Rome, and he could write of a Sunday afternoon's "quiet jiving in the cool, vaulted cellars of Rugantino's" in such a way that we realize this was an experience not to be missed. At the same time he wrote of the paintings of Afro, Scialoja and Capogrossi, which were then still new and alien claims staked in a field of art with which he himself experienced great kinship. In 1961 Fahlström moved to settle in New York. From there, over a succession of years, he was to furnish Sweden with written and filmed reports of both its art and its society. His wilful sign-painting was transformed by his encounter with New York and its art world, and he returned to Stockholm to stage the sort of mixed-media performances then known as "happenings."

The structure of the happening very much suited Fahlström, with his interest in the dramatic productions of opera. In a happening he was able to mix the sublime with the trivial, sweeping perspectives with a myopic scrutiny of detail. In this way he could get what he called the "hard material of reality" to yield new and unexpected meanings. This method had fascinated him ever since the early fifties, when he began to take an interest in concrete poetry and its arbitrary dissection of the language to win new meanings from it. It was the classical metaphor, as he had once encountered it in Surrealism, that Fahlström subsequently took with him when he set out on new adventures. In Arthur Koestler he found the concept of "bisociation," which lent further support to his method. Fahlström interpreted Koestler as follows: "... when you find piece A and find a piece B, and there's a violent ignition when you rub A against B! In other words, the result is something entirely different, and much greater, than the sum of the two."

Fahlström gave the impression of having been affected as a very young man by the contradictory, incomprehensible and incoherent nature of existence. The experience imbued his work with an undertone of tragedy, but he devoted all his energy—and it was considerable—to overcoming these obstacles to an understanding of the world and his place

in it. In an interview given not very long before he died, he put it in these words: "... to achieve a union of understanding and enjoyment, to give expression to the frightening brevity of life, and to our terrible inadequacy in a world in which we have to struggle for our experiences and to create happiness."

It is in remarks like this that we meet the antiauthoritarian disposition so basic to his character. The right to your own life, and to its experiences, however odd and deviant these may be, was central to Fahlström, and determined his attitude towards all forms of authority, and all deployment of power. He saw one possibility of formulating this poetically in the game, with its contrast between strict rules and hard facts on the one hand, and the interventions of chance on the other.

The independence and integrity that Fahlström could demonstrate in his relationship to what went on around him resembled at times that of the child who pointed to the Emperor in the parade and said aloud what everyone could see—that the Emperor was naked! The revolutionary element in Fahlström was that he never renounced this possibility. His incredible ability to gather facts on the state of the world, and then release them in the form of a narrative with elements of the strip cartoon, or a game that borrowed its character from Monopoly, reflected this quality of clear-sightedness. The Emperor was constantly paraded naked through his paintings, plays, films and reportage. Over the years the parade became a long one indeed, the participants in which included Albert Schweitzer, Winnie-the-Pooh, Henry Kissinger, Krazy Kat, Richard Nixon, Mao and Bob Hope, to name only a few.

It can be dangerous to draw excessive conclusions from details in the early life of an artist. At the same time, it seems increasingly clear that Modernism in particular is filled with *oeuvres* whose fate has been to reconstruct or hold fast a fleeting childhood. The artist's work has emerged as a protest at being bereft of a state which allows the world to emerge as precisely pleasurable and horrific, malleable and implacable as it appears to the child.

Fahlström's works are full of references to the polymorphously perverse, to the infantile tensions that find their release in the violence of the strip cartoon, to a world-history subject to the rules laid down for the puzzles and games with which he was kept amused as a child.

An episode in Fahlström's life may have contributed to this, namely the journey he made one summer, at the age of eleven, from Brazil—where he was born—to Sweden. The year was 1939, and owing to the outbreak of war it was to be eight whole years before he was reunited with his parents. This involuntary divorce from a familiar environment, and from the people closest to him, created in him an alienation, which provided the starting point for his colossal, encyclopedic labor to create a world in which his right of domicile was beyond question. In the loneliness in which this labor was performed lay also the foundation of his rejection of authority. Owing to external circumstances beyond its control, the child became independent, and so remained. Fahlström created a protective cover around the child's independence of conventional values, and its unconfused eye. His creative energy stemmed from this protective zone.

He was also able to preserve, in this zone, a purity, which characterized his every action. The energy with which he intervened in the affairs of the world, and of art, seemed powered by a dry fire which burned clean everything he touched. In the ashes left in his wake, the patterns of the constellations of power, and their manipulations, appeared with devastating clarity. Fahlström was the only person I have met who could use the word happiness in such a way that you really felt it to mean something.

It was from this strict, unconfused view of the world, that he was able to propose that everyone should be allocated free food, that little Sweden should be made a field of experiment for unilateral disarmament, and that every community should erect a great House of Pleasure, in which all the obstacles to sensual and intellectual enjoyment created by our social taboos would be eliminated.

When we study Fahlström's works of art, or browse in the huge volumes of text, published and unpublished, in verse and in prose, that he left behind, there are moments when we seem to see the state of the world with the same clear eyes as he did. His proposals and models then appear plainly superior to the solutions we are continuously accepting in the name of so-called rationality. Fahlström's unique strength as a poetic witness lay in his ability constantly to keep the vision alive. He never stopped talking about the nakedness of the Emperor.

Stockholm 1979–82

Has the locust-milk curdled yet in the god's crooked eyes?
unfortunately
the stomach-horn
though droning
has been fixed within us so that not even the storm
through the pine trees which have waded through the ocean and are now coming
ashore can prevent their own nose-blood streaming into us
while the foghorns of excrement throw up coconuts
and fountains of brooches in mating colors shatter the walls around your head
now the homeless march off by the thousand
naked crouching and with a plate on their arse
and an enemy hand
each one has an enemy hand upon him some hold on to one's face
others to one's sex tongue foot chest
an iron grip which closes ever tighter
penetrates ever deeper all one can do is have patience
if one tries to break free of it the fingers bore into one's flesh
and the whole hand disappears into one's entrails one feels it
dreadfully sharply closing around the bowels
gripping the stomach so that the food flies out
boring its way through liver and abdomen
plays a moment at crushing the windpipe
and then approaches the heart
first it strokes the heart a while tickles and scratches
every moment one thinks is the last
but one must not stop moving
and then suddenly it grips the heart
and crushes it like a glove
only then does one fall and from the black saliva at the mouth
it is clear what sort of death one died
and for its sake probosces glide through the earth like periscopes
sticking up in the fields of corn
waving whistling
and set off alarm clocks to sound the knell of death in the stomachs of us all

From "The Decline of the Borborygms" ca. 1950



Opera. 1953–1955

1968 silkscreen version of felt pen, gouache and ink on paper original,
10 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 466 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (27 × 1,185 cm.)

Private Collection

(when did you hear the canards through the lava through
the codfish through your thumbs through)

is
it
postage stamps
raining
raining
over the mashed turniposaurs
the
Last
hallucinator
weakly
weakly
breaking
his sacred
demijohns
now the equals sign disappeared in the darkness again

From "The Decline of the Borborygms" ca. 1950

Opera began with my discovery of the felt-tip pen in 1952. With this, I could work not only with a fairly precise, even blackness like India ink, but also with gradations of gray which were not fuzzy like pencil drawings; the felt tip also produced random textures. The pleasurable "spontaneism" in that method of working felt monotonous after a while. I began to put together some of the sheets on which I had drawn, and could see continuity and larger schemes beginning to appear.



BEFORE EIGHT

Before eight her father had always followed behind her and picked them up. Now he was dead.

Her breasts had been coming loose for a long time, and she had tried to press them hard against her body so that they would grow back into place. She began to nourish them with ultraviolet lamps, but that merely accelerated the charring. To prevent it spreading to the rest of her body, she held them away from herself.

She borrowed an arm to lay over the exposed dark patches. Since it was living flesh it grew into place. Precious as it was, she would divert attention by carving on it; she called the closely woven intricate patterns "Skeletons of the gods." Otherwise only the gentle chink of teacups could be heard; it was dark in the room except for the bed in the ultraviolet glow. Some of the guests were hairdressers with their wives. Several of the wives had also worked for many years in the same business. Some had reached a venerable age, others were younger. Engagement rings glittered on their fingers.

When the new maid came in, the flapping of her apron stirred up the ashes of the breasts in her hands. They had died.

At the same moment she had a vision of swans' wings beating against the ultraviolet lamp, there was a sudden radiance, and the table was laid. The wind howled outside. The maid had to bite off her hands and feet to be able to get into the bed where she herself and the maid, with the help of the ashes, were moulded into a dough which was laid to rise in a moist lump, so that they would no longer be two, but *one*. One *happy* person.

In the exquisitely beautiful bower the wind was howling. It was as large as a basilica, a group of ancient trees which had curved inwards to form a vaulted canopy to prevent themselves collapsing, their arched crowns meeting much higher up on one side than the other. There were cows standing there, row upon row just as in a normal cow shed, ghostly white with patches like irregular leaf-shadows moving in the wind. But what was not visible was the milk thief creeping in every night beneath their sleeping

I also saw that various different ideas, joined together as an entity, produced shifts: unexpected, "unnatural" events on the paper. I was interested at that time in Pre-Columbian Mexican book-paintings, which evolved from page to page in long panels, folded in concertina fashion. And in music—as a graphic artist, I lacked the temporal dimension that exists in music. I particularly liked the "impure" mixture of concert and theater to be found in opera (The Ring of the Nibelungs, for example!)



bodies, holding tight as she climbed in, her hands clasped around the ends of their gently swaying tails, her mouth round the udders sucking them dry. And thus she moved on from cow to cow.

But while she lived in luxury and abundance with the cows, with the slaves, with her property, with her animals, the peasants were suffering the most extreme deprivation, suppressed and governed by the pigs.

While she could eat freely of all the people she had frightened, wash them from morning till night, blow them up with air so that they could float, gently prod them so that they floated up to heaven, and pull them down with a string when they lay there floating on the surface among the rest of the dead—the peasants were having to toil for their lives long into the night, as the sweat froze and chilled their emaciated bodies, torn by splinters from jagged fences with every step they took, fighting with packs of wolves for a supper of bitter vegetables, if they were not carried off to the swamp by the wolves and sucked down into the deep in a bloody embrace with the hairy beasts, if before dawn broke and it was time to go out to work in the fields again without food without sleep without a moment's rest in the well-built hut where the pigs slept by day, at least provided they did not prefer to trample to death the little children who seemed to be born with a flick of the wrist constantly more and constantly fewer, but that was against the pigs' habits because they had to be fresh and awake at night when father finally if he came home came home. He hardly dared creep into a corner furthest from the fire to stroke his wife's hands, red from the tears she had had to choke back all day, if she had survived the treatment the pigs had subjected her to (they usually thrust her into the oven and roasted her when she was going to bathe them before dinner in the huge blue clay tub which shattered every day when they lay in it and which her little ones had to mould anew every morning often standing naked in the ice-cold stream until late at night, if the pigs had not previously made the children insult them so that they had to fight duels with the pigs who knocked them down head-first into the sand to practice somersaults over their naked toes, the only part sticking up; if none of that happened, they used to sneak in when the fire was crackling loudest in order not to be noticed, and lie down motionless on the floor in the hope that the pigs would think them dead of overexertion, hunger and lack of sleep, a thing which always happened sooner or later, for they were so poor that

I realized how, as in much primitive, oriental and medieval art, one could work with pictures which were so full and so extensive that it was not possible to take that step backwards, screw up one's eyes and enjoy the whole . . . I wanted to get people to move not just their eyes but their whole person, along and around in the picture as if they were reading a map, or playing Monopoly or football.



all the dishes in the pantry were licked clean by the pigs (for whom the food was made): there was hardly a scrap left over for the tiniest, since all the mother's milk was consumed by the pigs; no, pigs as we all know are omnivorous, and the miserable bit of money that the family had earned by the end of the year all went on replacing the china that the pigs had swallowed; they had to lie on the floor, they could not afford so much as a sheaf of blackened corn for supper from the stall where the dead horse stood, not so much as a Good Night father Good Night dear, they could not even afford to throw away their own excrement, but went to town every week and sold it, getting enough by the end of the year for a handful of chaff from the shopkeeper; how many times had father, tears mingling with the sweat of his brow, had to beat it out of his children who fought a desperate battle to hold it in, since then the hunger did not feel so bad; at other times they had nothing to offer, but accepted the lashes without a word, accustomed as they were to not complaining; it was also important that they did not get so thin that the pigs did not want to lie on them at night, for then they would often pick up mother trembling with drowsiness, to lie on one of the magnificent beds from grandfather's time, only to knock her to the floor a moment later with the most severe reproaches; after a few hours the pigs would sometimes ease off a little from their jokes, and if you just breathed in time with them it was actually far from unbearable to lie under them, it was nice and warm and you didn't need to move, nor did it last long, in a while it was time to get up and go to work and make a meal for the pigs, who were always very punctual, to go out to the kitchen and start the fire in the stove that took up almost the whole kitchen and was covered with stone tiles, while the smallest had to go out into the forest in the dark to cut wood and pick fresh blackberries if the pigs did not want to have a ride through the forest to work up an appetite, but generally everything took its normal course and everyone was content with each day he was alive, for if we demanded everything of life, what would the world be like then?

Now a dog has stuck to the windowpane again so that nothing can be seen. Several weeks pass.

Everyone knew that her house was on the top of a mountain. It had once slipped down from a higher mountain and landed on this mountain. But nobody knew that the

The idea of a game was my current interest at the time I was writing the "Manifesto for Concrete Literature." There too I expressed impatience with the monotony and private nature of pure automatism. One ought to be able to make simple rules for oneself, create frames of reference within the work of art. The simplest fundamental rule in Opera was: repetition. It felt then like a big discovery: not (merely) a continuous sequence of constantly changing motifs, but a decision—this one is important, this shall have a rule. Recurring in new contexts, and recurring altered, but recognizable.





Detail, 1968 silkscreen version of *Opera*, 1953–55
 Felt pen, gouaché and ink on paper, 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 466 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (27 × 1,185 cm.)
 Private Collection

top was a crater which had its opening in the toilet which took up almost the whole bathroom. A huge ass's skin was stretched over the toilet, and she used to dance on it until she fell down. Then she would remove the skin and sit down on the opening of a pipe which reached down into the depths of the volcano. The pressure forced the lava up and into her until she was completely filled by it; then she emptied herself and sucked in new. Nothing could give her such a feeling of all-consuming pleasure.

When she left the bathroom she was always full. What she liked best was to lie down and sleep heavy with lava: the worst thing was to wake up in the middle of the night and suddenly feel absolutely empty. She always slept under the bed.

So nobody heard when air first started seeping out of her. In the morning she felt a little fragile in the armpits, but she did not think much of it and went straight out to the rooms to look at the soberly dressed civilians walking everywhere through the house according to carefully planned routes so that there were always some, and about ten in the lounge, going through every room in the house. From time to time she could no longer contain herself and burst out in resounding laughter. In the evenings she would change parts of the body on them ready for the next day ("crop" them, as she used to say), and then hang them up from the ceiling. Thus several years went by.

One afternoon when she had been trying on hats for twins, the one more oddly shaped than the other, until her whole head ached, she went into the next room without looking round and at that very moment was met by a deafening noise in the middle of the room and had difficulty in breathing. Her whole head was bursting with the force of the air from her body pressing against the air from the walls meeting with no chance of mingling and with the burstingpoint gradually coming closer and closer because the surface of the walls was much greater and the nearer she came the more surfaces began to release air pressure as protection against her own. The whole room looked like a book bound in invisible fish-scales, with pages made of cauliflower leaves, the fish inside, and the walls a steep pitched roof beneath and herself a new small roof on the roof and the air the house.

A door had broken away behind her and was now driven inexorably forward in the force of the air from the overpowering pressure of the walls; the whole lurching reeling door had a blue turbulent surface. The pressure on her increased tenfold, even her

clothes were compelled by the external pressure to take sides against her and tightened around her soft flesh like rubber gloves.

Maddened by exhaustion and pain she shut her eyes and ripped off her clothes. Then suddenly she felt the pain expanding to fill her whole body, except for her legs which still had stockings on; she pulled them off without daring to open her eyes. The pain rose in a massive wave from her legs up through her whole body, a wave of aching swelling pressure which had now begun to advance from various points of her body, outwards, upwards. She was giving birth to herself, from every part her whole body was going through the process of being born again to be able to withstand the battle against the walls, against the whole house which was relentlessly squeezing her into her own self.

She realized that the pressure on her at that moment was so intense that her own air pressure was turned in against herself as her clothes had been; so all hope of rescue was lost, and imprisoned in her new body which would not be able to be born, she would slowly be crushed to extinction by the pressure of the walls.

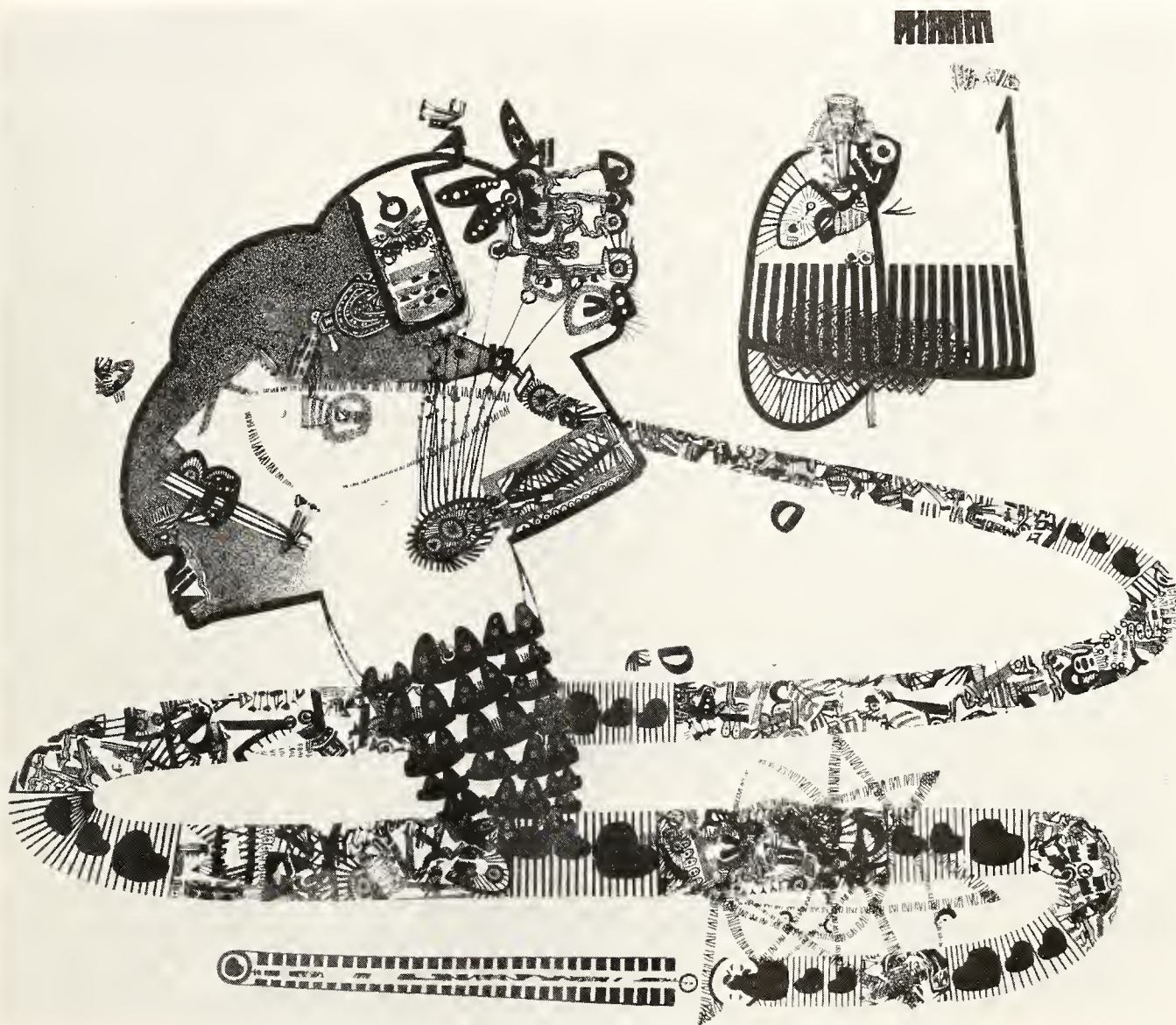
She could do nothing, she still kept her eyes closed to avoid having to see her body, which was as blue as an abscess, and all the time it was as if a heavy paralysis had laid itself over the back of her head and robbed her of the ability to think, so that she stood in the middle of the room consciously unconscious and just felt the pressure surging out of her and towards her.

The bursting open of the door had produced a counterpressure from the walls of the adjacent room, but the nearest walls were in the way. Hardly had she begun to feel the difference, when the walls cracked, but at that moment her new body managed to force its way forward a little in her and her own counterpressure was strengthened in the face of the attack from the walls of the new room and from the three remaining walls of the room in which she stood.

But all this takes far too long to describe for the other doors and then the walls had shattered she had managed to force herself one stage closer to birth the nearest walls had collapsed under the pressure which now held her nailed like a board in the air while the walls exploded in a furious rhythm alternating with her contractions which bore her higher and higher in the air until the pressure from the whole of the collapsing lower storey overturned the whole upper storey the pressure from which no longer had anything to impede it but hurled itself out into the air so that she herself was flung down to the ground and finally burst.

• • • •

1950



Feast on Edlund. 1955
 India ink on paper, $24\frac{7}{8} \times 29\frac{15}{16}$ " (63 × 76 cm.)
 Private Collection, Los Angeles

DARLING

the tomatoes have stuck on your points on the pitch-stained house walls
oh what a crunching there is when the masts are bitten to bare your stomach
where organs resounding are boiled from soap
and teeth rain down

if I only knew where the fanfare which leads to the handrail across the river to your
head writ large in
every note has its coat of arms
every neck its yolk

but this mist streaming from my stomach
for it is my entrails' playtime
so that I can see nothing whichever way I turn
nothing wrong with my pee it has all its bees on guard but if someone in the mist should want

bkrpt there
squeeze the spleen out of me and run away as fast as it can
luckily I have a safety cord on my belt so it won't get far
now there was a sudden jerk
But I should never have said anything
Now the whole lot leapt out of me and are pulling
me away with their cords I have no chance when there are twenty of them
if I were to lay myself on the ground they would drag me
helpless as someone caught hiding in a lavatory I was led away by my own spider's web
into a cinema they go of course I sit down
as my entrails immediately begin to kiss the whole audience
who luckily notice nothing because the film is on
but what will happen when the lights go up
soon all the audience's entrails have been enticed out and are engaged in a frenzied fancy dress party
when the lights go on the whole ceiling is full of newborn entrails in their turn giving birth
and a whimpering of all those that cannot find their way back
and all that are in the process of dying
and all that do not want to be parted and all the newborn
then I feel myself suddenly so devoid of all echoes
that I kiss my neighbor so hard
that the suction passes right through him to the next who is sucked into him until the whole
audience is inseparably united in
the same kiss
then the manager climbs on to the podium in his wife's feather boa
which immediately turns frigid and is transformed into a sunset
and welcomes us

From "The Decline of the Borborygms" ca. 1950

From the poetic cycle THE LARGE AND THE SMALL

with the voice of young men as hosts
I find her in a flowing profusion of nuances
it is so strange to nod violently from golden cow-cunts as helmets
it is thus young men who turn
with the voice of violence from
 a flowing profusion of nuances
oum oum a-é

it was thus I saw him establish hearing
 as she still lay in blankets of filtered sound
 of voices from men
 of men who became worlds of the worlds which she
could stop by feeling to feel if she had yet herself become hearing
 of golden jerseys which she found
 in flowing nuances and cow-cunts which dilated with happiness
A ourna
oh e ou a-ouou

it's possible that if something hidden appears it can take voice
she was filtered away to become hearing
 golden cow-cunts their helmets
remained behind on the filter
it is possible that the voice became the hosts' again
young men who became worlds and stopped in
 a flowing profusion of nuances
oh-a
oum oum a-

1953

HALLO ALL STUPID TITLES

the water in the cavity
should leak beneath the cover over beds of ulsters
he burns himself
on fires of nines
he had gone around long enough
with an electric plug in his nose
for he could bear only food transformed into electricity
a rudder sticking out of his skull guided him
through a huge baroque slaughterhouse in the dark
where gentlemen in gold-laced whips sat absorbed in their entrails
some scratched a little with a nail brush on another's so that the other puce with helplessness
was seized with convulsions and others equally exquisitely poured tea on the
entrails of another and wrote letters to themselves on the entrails of another
black boomerangs make music
light is available everywhere one only needs to break something and it bursts into flames
while wife and children live on in one's handkerchief
others are so delighted that they set fire to themselves everywhere
so that finally they lose the desire to go out and stay just sitting on their heads
they forget that the rest of us are enjoying summer now and
gliding on beautiful sheets across the bays
cows are born so cheerful and happy in any place
and bounce up as rocking chairs for exploding fish
which burst in the heat
and are provided with mast and sail by the cows
so that they can follow
in the wake of the sheets

ca. 1950

Æsir-Goddess

in my Castle the vultures wrinkle rattling beneath the tap of eternity
a powerful grip on the everlasting washer every time I swallow
kokorira! the peasant head kokorira glistening with peasant speed and wrinkled rind
a lake in Italy where a thousand sabres float and then the ice floe towering up to
the sky where they are roasted as sacrificial carrion
he lives at the table once every quarter hour never outside then every breath
half thunder half water then head-in-sand from ice floe to ice floe (ball point) and
with the certainty of an unexploded bomb

the lightning conductor has blown the marrow from the vultures: only the rucksack
is swinging in the mist
with the speed of hormones in the moonlight Bang bang drop by drop the tigress-jumper
is packed
grey as cunt-spray at dawn Mr Hunter Hunter Hunter Eriksson lightning conductor
late terribly late I remained standing in a bank note

Æsir-Goddess

(two variations)

he lives at the table once every quarter hour never outside then every breath
the lightning conductor has blown the marrow from the vultures: only the rucksack
is swinging in the mist
a powerful grip on the everlasting washer every time I swallow
a lake in Italy where a thousand sabres float and then the ice floe towering up to
the sky where they are roasted as sacrificial carrion
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is swinging in the mist

Ö.F.: HIPY PAPY BTHUTHDTH THUTHDA BTHUTHDY

From *Manifesto for Concrete Poetry* (1953)

"Since inviting about a hundred dogs to my home for a two-week course on lyric poetry some time ago, I have gone over to writing worlets (words, letters)."

"Remplacer la psychologie de l'homme... par L'OBSSESSION LYRIQUE DE LA MATIERE" (Manifesto for Futurist Literature, 1912).

1. The present situation

... Poetry is not just for analysis, but is also created as a structural entity. And not just as a structure with the emphasis on the expression of ideas, but also as a concrete structure. Let us take our leave of the systematic or unsystematic depiction of all kinds of personal-psychological, contemporary-cultural or universal problems. Words are symbols, of course, but that is no reason for not being able to experience and create poetry on the basis of language as concrete matter.

The fact that words have a symbolic value is no more remarkable than representational forms in the visual arts having a symbolic value over and above what they superficially represent, or non-figurative forms, even a white square on a white canvas, also having symbolic value, also providing broader associations, beyond our experience of the interplay of proportions.

The situation is this: ever since the War there has been a lasting, melancholy, doom-ridden mood, a feeling that all experimental extremes have been exhausted. For those who do not wish to drift into the intoxicating worlds of either heavenly or alcoholic spirits, all that remains with the means available to us is to analyze
analyze
analyze our wretched human condition.

Today when labored symbolic cryptograms, romantic effusions of beautiful words or anguished, contorted faces outside the church gate seem to be the only marketable alternatives, the alternative of concrete form must also be put forward.

Its fundamental principle is: everything that can be expressed in language and every linguistic expression has equal

status in any context if it enhances the significance of that context.

The problems explored by Dostoevsky thus seem to me no more substantial or human than speculation on whether men's voices are more beautiful as hosts than as worlds. (A reference to Ö.F.'s own poem "The Large and the Small.") The subject of a play need not be a poet or a dictator in a particular temporal situation, but could equally well consist of the established fact that a particular sound can never be repeated. The results of experimental psychology can be used as the basis for a prose work just as well as those of psychoanalysis. I depict certain characters, Bob, Tom, Steve, Mary, Pat, without the least interest in them as human beings. Literature is not inhuman because of that. Ants would only write books about ants, but human beings, with their ability to be objective and take a wider perspective, do not need to be so one-sided.

2. Material and media

What is to be made of the new material? Of course it can be shaken up and reconstituted in any form whatsoever and can then be regarded from a "concrete" viewpoint as always equally viable?

That can always be said in the early stages. But the fact that the new media of expression have not yet had their evaluative criteria established, need not prevent us examining these new media, if our criteria are ever going to be clarified.

One method is to oppose as often as possible the law of least resistance. Law-lea-res. That is no guarantee of success, but it is one way of not standing still on the same spot. Utilize systems as well as automatism, preferably in combination, but only as a means to an end. So, refrain from ambitions of achieving the "purest" poetry by means of automatism; even the Surrealists no longer advocate that. And there is nothing wrong with systems: if one chooses them oneself, and does not follow conventional ones. It is thus not a question of whether the system in itself is The Only Right One. It will be right because one has chosen it and if it gives good results.

Thus, for example, I can construct a series of twelve vowels in a certain order and make my worlets out of them, even though a twelve vowel series as such does not have the same conventional justification as a series of the twelve tones of the chromatic scale.

Much is said about the yearning of the modern age for a fixed code of values. One thing is certain: now that we have grown tired of rigid meter, regular rhythms, and finally even of rhyme, we must find something else to give a poem unity. Nowadays there is a tendency for the unifying element to be the *content*, both in terms of the subject described and the ideas it represents. But it is best if form and content function as one.

What remains, therefore, is to endow form again with its own system of values. That has already been done, for example, in contrapuntal music. The possibilities are endless. In poetry there can be fractured stanzas with vertical parallelism, so that the content provides the form by the fact that when a word is repeated, it must be placed exactly under the last occurrence of the same word, or vice versa, so that when part of a line is put vertically in parallel with one above, it brings with it the meaning of the line above. Identical stanzas aided by linefilling with the rhyme on the final word in the line, or with corresponding syllables, words, etc. Marginal stanzas by the side of main stanzas. Framework stanzas having a nucleus stanza within: the possibility of several interpretations corresponding to the free movement of the eyes when looking at abstract art. That is to say, stanzas which can be read not only from left to right and from top to bottom, but also vice versa, and vertically: all the first words in each line, then all the second, third, and so on. Mirror-writing, diagonal reading. Inversion of lines, especially of short lines. Free stress and free word-order, as in classical literature. (The fact that we do not have the same linguistic conditions for that is no argument.) The profusion of possibilities enables us to achieve a greater complexity and functional differentiation, in which each of the various parts of the content of a work acquires its own form.

The simplest of all systematizations of formless material is as always the alternation of antitheses, antitheses within all conceivable aspects of the work of art. The interplay of difficult and easy sentences (or paragraphs, or words), of the magniloquent and the simple, the syntactically normal and primitively cumulative, some related and some unrelated to their context, the airy and the ponderous, the halting and the smooth, the onomatopoeic and the mimetic.

Not just simple alternations, but also intensification—and rhythms. Anything except the comfortable predictable ca-

dences of Lawleares. (Of course, it is another matter if amorphous sections are inserted with intentional, directed effect.)

Above all, I believe that the creation of rhythmic forms provides undreamt-of possibilities. Rhythm is not just the most elemental, directly physical and tangible medium; it is the pleasure of recognizing something already known, it is the significance of repetition; it is connected with the rhythmic pulse of breathing, blood circulation and ejaculation. It is wrong to think that the jazz band has a monopoly of inducing collective rhythmic ecstasy. Drama and poetry can also produce it. It can even be done in the visual arts, with their limited temporal dimension, as Capogrossi has demonstrated.

The solution is to break away from always churning out the new, new, new; not to leave behind a litter-bin full of designs for every step one takes in a work: to stick instead to motifs, let them repeat themselves, form rhythms: to work for example with infilling rhythmic words as a foundation for main sentences, which can be either bound by or free from the background rhythm. Independent onomatopoeic rhythmic phrases, similar to the ones constructed by an African or Indian drummer to characterize his rhythmic melodies. Simultaneous reading, and above all recitation of several lines, of which at least one consists of rhythmic words. Metrical rhythms too, of course; rhythmic word-order, rhythmic spaces.

Another method of achieving unity and coherence is to extend the logic by creating new correspondences and new logical progressions. The simplest course is to turn to the logic of primitive peoples, of children and of the mentally ill, which abolishes contradictions, the logic of simile, of sympathetic magic.

Applying that logic to language: like-sounding words belong together; jokes even depend on them. Rhyme can function similarly. Myths have been explained in this way: when Deucalion and Pyrrha wanted to create new human beings after the Flood, they threw stones, and men and women grew from them: the word for stone was *laas*, and for people, *laos*.

Consequently if I hear of firing, I am not sure whether someone has been shot, burnt or dismissed. Figs are related to figment, pigs to pigmentation, but not vice versa. Homonyms are also rich in possibilities. Syllepsis belongs to this category too: uniting words, sentences and paragraphs; for example, "poetry is poetry is poetry," where the middle "poetry" is both beginning and end. And for a whole work, the word "curvo" inserted at intervals, always grammati-

cally uninflected, is just as good a cohesive agent for the structure as a single idea carried right through. Always that precious element of repetition to provide the joy of recognition.

Particularly in the more discursive art forms of epic and drama, and also film, one has to create a course of events of the same structural stability as reality itself. Give new functions to the component parts and then really exploit them, instead of using the easy improvisations that flow from inspiration; and weave a tight and distinct net of relationships. Adhere to the conventions you have constructed yourself, but not to those of others.

With such rich possibilities, ordinary interpretations and antitheses such as tragic and comic must be a facile simplification. The value of the relationship pig/pigmentation does not, therefore, consist entirely in the humorous effect which can come from the unexpected juxtaposition.

Another form of magic with the resources of language is to be found in what might be conventionally seen as the arbitrary attribution of new meanings to letters, words, sentences or paragraphs: we could say that all *i*'s in a particular worlet denote "sickness," the more there are, the more serious the illness—or the word "sickness" in a specific paragraph denotes "all sounds," or "profits"—or that all verbs, in addition to their lexical meaning, also denote "cold."

One can take a step in that direction by putting well-known words in such a completely unfamiliar context that one undermines the reader's certainty of the sacred relationship between the word and its meaning, and makes him experience the conventional meanings as just as arbitrary or just as certain as the newly-attributed meanings. This phenomenon is nowhere more remarkable than in the case of Povel Ramel, the man who suffered among other things from stage fright, and spoke of his fever mounting in stages, so that we became aware—in this case both through the situation and the word-similarity—of a new meaning in the word "stage."

That is not to say that the appearance of the well-known in a strange context arouses in everyone a productive uncertainty about the contiguity of word and phenomenon. It may perhaps stimulate an equally fruitful interest in the form itself, that is if the sentences in question are so meaningless to the reader and his interest sufficiently aroused that he continues looking for significance. Many sentences appear at first to be without significance, neither particularly funny nor poignant, neither pregnant with meaning nor vaguely sonorous.

Not least because they contain unacceptable words. Unacceptable words are those that despite the enormous expansion of poetic vocabulary during the last half century, are still not regarded as poetically viable. "Shopkeepers," "enthusiasm," "clubs," "expression," "atrocious," "whisk," "guys," "dozen," "gland." They occur, of course, but how often compared with the old guard? Reading a dictionary is just as rich in discoveries for a language-artist as browsing through a manual on insects, car engines or the body's tissues can be for a graphic artist.

Sentences can also seem empty of meaning by being constructed in a different way. This involves not just changing the word order, but shuffling the whole inbuilt clausal structure; and because thought processes are dependent on language, every attack on prevailing forms of language ultimately enriches worn-out modes of thought, thus constituting a stage in the development of language itself—and those thought processes always take place on three levels: the everyday, the literary and the academic.

Ideas for the renewal of sentence structure can come from making comparisons with foreign languages. Chinese, for example, with its lack of parts of speech, and its dependence on word order for meaning; or the unexpected nuances of expression in the languages of many primitive peoples. But it is perhaps more important, and anyway easier, to investigate the language of the mentally ill. Looking at tests on manic-depressives, for instance, one finds effects, admittedly not artistically intended, such as word combinations (contamination), pure sound-associations, word constructions (neologisms), and almost rhythmical reiteration (perseveration).

Another method is to see what can be made use of in language produced purely mechanically, by choosing new directions in which to read, or by arranging words and sentences in sequential chains. We must slowly push back the frontiers of meaning. We can find undreamt-of value in the—from our present viewpoint—most truncated and disjointed word and sentence structures.

MANIPULATE the material of language: that is what will justify a label such as concrete. Manipulate not just overall structures: rather, begin with the smallest elements, letters, words. Move letters around, as in anagrams. Repeat letters in words; intersperse alien words: gla-ten-dly; alien letters: aacataiaoana for action; explore children's secret code languages and other private languages; vowel glides: glaeiouwdly. And of course "lettristic," newly invented words. Abbreviationmania to coin neologisms, exactly as in everyday language—we already have Lawleares. It is always

a matter of reshaping the material and not allowing oneself to be reshaped by it. The fundamental principle of concrete poetry can perhaps best be illustrated by Pierre Schaeffer's key experience during his search for concrete music: he had on tape a few seconds of railway engine noise, but was not content just to follow that noise with another, even if the juxtaposition was an unusual one. Instead he cut out a little fragment of the engine noise and repeated that fragment with slightly altered pitch; then went back to the first, then the second, and so on, to give an alternation. Only then had he created; he had performed an operation on the material itself by cutting it up: the elements were not new; but the new whole which had been formed had created new matter.

It will be clear from this that what I have called concrete literature is not a style, any more than concrete music or non-figurative visual art is. It is partly a way for the reader to experience literary art, primarily poetry, and partly a liberation for the poet, putting at his disposal all linguistic material and all the means to work on it. Literature which is created on that basis is therefore neither in opposition to nor identical with Lettrism or Dada and Surrealism.

Lettrism: both normal "descriptive" and "lettristic" words can be understood as both form and content: the "descriptive" provide a stronger experience of content and a weaker experience of form, "lettristic" vice versa—a difference only of degree.

If one looks at the actual creations of Surrealist poetry, they appear to have certain similarities with worlets. But there is a difference in the point of departure which ultimately must have an effect on the results: the concrete reality of my worlets is not at all in opposition to the reality of their surroundings: they are neither dream-sublimation nor futuristic fantasy, but an organic part of the reality I am living in, although with their own principles for life and development.

A coquettish or anguished contortion, and even more the nihilism of Dada, can be productive if one looks at the artistic result; here again it is the point of departure that counts: I can find no reason to talk of contortion and nihilistic negation, I have no feeling of an artistic construct, of an unusual state of affairs—this is normality. A constructive Dadaism and thus not Dada at all.

When I have used the word "concrete" in these contexts, it has a stronger association with concrete music than with visual concretism in a narrow sense. Also, of course, the concrete poet is in the tradition of formalists and language manipulators of all ages: the Greeks, Rabelais, Gertrude Stein, Schwitters, Artaud, and many others. And he looks up in veneration not only to Owl in *Winnie the Pooh* but also to Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty, who regards every question as a riddle and imbues words with unfathomable meanings.

1953

Ilmar Laaban: Öyvind Fahlström, CONCRETE POET

One of Öyvind Fahlström's plays is entitled "The Hard and the Soft." Its thesis is that the excessively hard requires "laxation," while the excessively soft requires the application of order or "taxation." A "lax" and a "tax" are the Swedish for respectively a salmon and a dachshund, and the action of the play incorporates models of these two creatures, called Laximil and Taximil, as sense images of the two operations—and the action, it need hardly be said, shoots with the liveliest of ammunition over the target as thus defined, with its apparently harmless *burlesquerie*. Even so, we find here formulated a dialectical process central to Öyvind Fahlström's world of fantasy, his "*imagination matérielle*" (that term of Bachelard's that is so supremely applicable in his case). The hardness, the distinction, the concretion of even that fantasy's most apparently whimsical creations have a consistency as of red-hot flowing magma

that has been suddenly solidified in cold, and, hardly before it is set, exposed to aggressions, to forces seeking its inner erosion, deformation and dissolution. And the key words in the titles given to his two collections of poetry also suggest not only a development but also a dialectical process. On the one hand, the "table" (Swedish *bordet* = *b* [for *betydelse*, "meaning"] + *ordet*, "the word"), the intractable but solidly hewn, angular, hard, serviceable, movable object (and behind it the entire Fahlströmian dimension of dangerous, thorny, fantastically teeming everyday life). On the other, the *borborygmus* (medical Greek for stomach rumbling), the process that dissolves the hard and solid into sound, released energies and excrement, and dies. The tension—and exchangeability—between life and death is infinite and ever-present in Öyvind Fahlström, a constant, ongoing process of creation that is at the same time a destructive event.

August 1979

THE HOTEL

slowly the whole of my head begins to speak

to be able to float in chorus
children are included in it without being at all tempted to restrain themselves
around the horizon big gentle fights—small strangers, cicadas

may I accompany you strings of children sweep past into the distance (do not
try to aim at them) bang head against head and groin
one shot day, one shot night
until one night they brake in warmed-up McCarthy pants, four portions in
each and the platform sways
crowned by a bottomless cave

longer and longer between the shots
warm receptionist hours hawk hour after hour
until the cleft widens between the two child-Stakhanovites each on its tripod
playing hawk and tern
and the vaulted canopy of the showcase sinks dripping with beer and dung
class upon class right down to the first preparatory boiling water on their laps
in the twilight urgent throbs of love between hawk and tern with a spire for
a tongue and
recoiling from wild bites floats
in honey which is slowly becoming lighter far away beyond the last twitching
of the wings
one for each buttonhole: twenty harsh sunrises around the horizon

two tongues bite another tongue
and a hawker's foolish coat (all the children flown from the nest)
flaps up as if borne on a wave of boundless hatred

August 1960



Ade-Ledic-Nander I. 1955

Oil, lacquer and tempera mounted on Masonite, 25 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (65 × 54 cm.)

Collection Robert Rauschenberg

Ö.F.:

Notes on "ADE-LEDIC-NANDER II" (1955–57) & some later developments

The title is arbitrary; it is the name of a principle or property described in a science fiction short story by Van Vogt. I used it to denote the three-part system or universe on which the large series (some twenty paintings were projected in extensive notes) of which only the small "introductory" no. 1 and the large no. 2 were completed. It was supposed to become a vast epic of the individuals, the "character-forms" in the three "clans" or "societies" ADE, LEDIC and NANDER.

In no. 2 you actually mostly see the first of the three "families" or "societies": the ADEs—recognized by their vertical form; by the "point-antenna-stabilizer" on their top; by their prevailing cool colors (the individual "clans" are often denoted by combinations of color stripes); by the black triangle in their center with many or few white "grains" showing its state as "well-fed and powerful" or "weak" which in turn opens or curtails a number of possibilities; by the "clawbeak" below on each individual character-form (it depends on a chunk of "matter" of ADE to function); by the wires between the individuals; by the lightning-zigzag between the "power-energy" element and the black triangle. These and five–ten more conditions (game-rules) make the ADEs live, struggle, multiply, break down, ail, subjugate, freeze etc. as is exemplified all over the painting.

In one place (the black "smoke" in the lower area of the painting) there is an isolated and threatened colony of roundish, reddish, centrally built

LEDICs—one of which overtakes an ADE (near the largest complete circle to the right), most other ADEs in the area being dissolved into "phantom-forms," outline-negative-forms, as they are not strong-healthy etc. enough to exist on the "barren" black background. One of them, like many of the ADEs, has incorporated part of a LEDIC as a particular valuable organ-slave-source-of-energy—this ADE finds its slave-organ developing dangerously now that it is close to its peers and eventually breaks the barriers and gets the better of its former exploiter.

Etc.

I made a detailed analysis-and-description of the painting, when I finished it; it covers thirty typed pages, and two "topographical maps"—in Swedish—it consists entirely of matter-of-fact descriptions like these above.

From above also follows

- I'm mainly interested in "*making paintings that are worlds by manipulating the world*"—by creating and relating *models* of the world; not *symbols*—anyone may put in whatever he finds—only he sees (some of) the relations: what is like, unlike, repeated, juxtaposed etc., etc.,
- the overall image is centralized—*you should not be able to grasp the painting, not even materially, in one look;*
- the structure is game-like—preset conditions as material for the plot—not surrealistic irrationality or neodadaistic "unrelationships"

(Rauschenberg i.e.); elements by decree of the painting, are tied up rather than cut off and isolated;

- the plot is one of multiple variations within the space, which is thus broken up into time, phases of time, (and space); technique of primitive and epic art and of comic strips;
- the *outline* (more than color and other formqualities) is of overwhelming importance, it is the basic form-criterion of the characterform; proportions, size etc. can be arranged for "decorative" purpose; outline, silhouette, never except of course for the purpose of the plot.

All this in turn has to do with what I'm doing now, among other things:

- *worlds*—my last extended work, the Planetarium, which I have been working on since late May, is the world of an interior monologue of a person—and the relations between words, figures (postures) and clothes. The next, The Cold War, will be a picture of balance, "false" or "real" balancing, of pairs of transformable elements on either side of a "neutral" channel, with its set of forms on strings.
- *decentralizing* — ADE-LEDIC-NANDER 2 should if reproduced always be accompanied by reproduction of detail.

The factor of transformability in my newer things, from *Sitting*... Six months later, tends to much more powerfully than before stress the perception piece-by-piece, instant-by-instant; stressed also by comics' frame in the *Sitting*... picture.



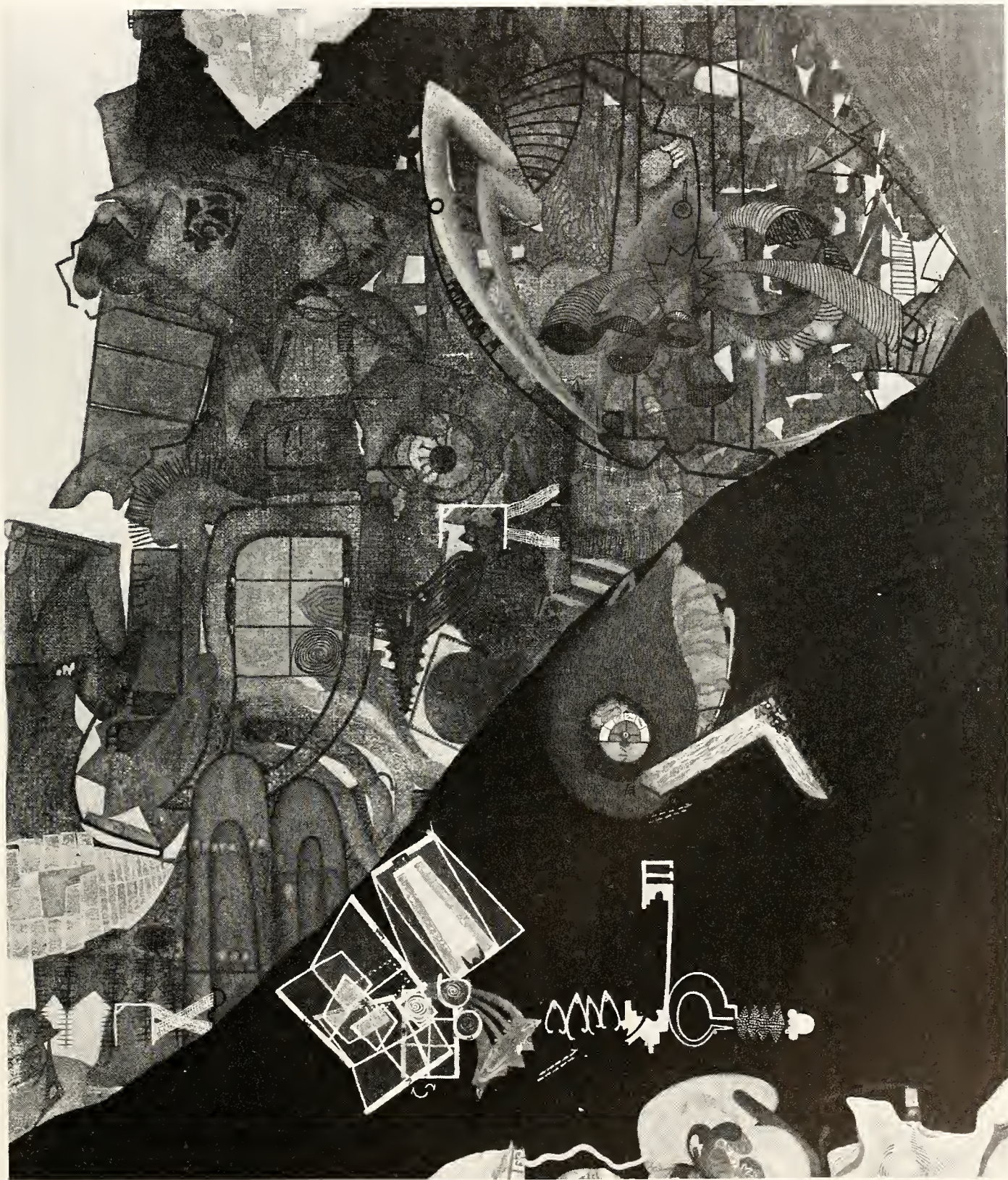
Ade-Ledic-Nander II. 1955–57
 Oil on canvas, 74 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 83 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (190 × 211 cm.)
 Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm



Details of Ade-Ledic-Nander II

- the *gamerules*—tend to be concentrated in what is seen *on* the painting, not in written complex conditions as in ADE-LEDIC-NANDER 2; this applies to the fewer, clearer, simpler properties-relations of the individuals, the character-forms, in the red, blue, violet, green, and the “auxiliary” white, black, and light yellow groups in *Sitting...*, in the transformable paintings are added purely material conditions: length of thread, magnetized or non-magnetized areas, fitting or not fitting outlines.
- *variations*—the ultimate concretizing of this principle appears in the transformable paintings which *never are one same picture*; whose arrangement is given by me on the painting (variations almost indefinite—i.e. Planetarium 188 loose elements) or usually on special panel with photographs or drawings of the variations, thus a kind of score. (add to *gamerules*: relations still arbitrary, rational or not—for instance in the Planetarium) all verbs relate to pants or skirt (loose, jointed forms to be arranged on figure, adverbs to hats, caps, bandages, berets—etc.)
- *the outline*—the striking concretization, again materially, by means of *cutting out silhouettes* (character-forms or figurative forms), in vinyl plastic, *painting* them, *jointing* them with rivets or hinges, *bending* with heat, *magnetizing* with ferrite-magnets. Magnetism beginning to be for me what electricity is for Tinguely.

New York, October 1960





Feast on Mad. 1958–59
India ink on paper, 39 3/8 x 47 1/4" (100 x 120 cm.)
Private Collection

Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd:

At the "Sunday evenings" held in the early fifties in François Arnal's flat in St. Germain-des-Prés there would appear, on occasion, a lean, pale young man with huge, inward-looking eyes. I assumed him to be a South American,

and we never spoke to each other. It emerged, subsequently, that his name was Fahlström, and that we lived a stone's throw from each other in the Old Town, in Stockholm.

Öyvind fascinated me: I knew no

one more unlike myself. His dry knowledge rustled away like a German encyclopedia. Given his lack of spontaneity, his words could pour like corrosive acid over his surroundings. Everything, as it came into contact

with Öyvind's incantations, became decadent. Fate, and chance, were only permitted on his own strict terms. If you criticized the appearance of a particular form, you were treated to exhaustive "Instructions for use," explaining, with a wealth of circumstance, not only the function of that particular form but also its genealogy.

One evening, when he had moved to Råsunda, I went out to see him. On his workdesk lay a generously washed drawing. "Great," I said. "That one really swings." Öyvind turned as pale as was physically possible for him. A primitively thundering, unisonal roar rose from the nearby football stadium. "This picture is unacceptable," he remarked, "I have just poured a cup of tea over it." But nor could he approve of the world, as it stood. The one utopia and realizable social proposal of his was constantly succeeding the other.

I learned from Öyvind that to "stand outside" the world by no means implied its rejection. That was in the mid-



Stockholm 1961. Photo: Gösta Nordin

fifties. Twenty years later, just before his death, he told me that he, the No. 1 scourge of injustice, had now become

such a public figure that he was concerned to find his way back again, to a hidden, but effective point of take-off.

1977

Robert Rauschenberg:

The logical or illogical relationship between one thing and another is no longer a gratifying subject to the artist as the awareness grows that even in his most devastating or heroic moment he is part of the density of an uncensored continuum that neither begins with nor ends with any decision or action of his.

I recognize the acceptance of this fact in the work of Fahlström whose characters in a plot of painting can take any shape, responding to the openly established dramatics of the picture map. They are free to operate, cooperate, incorporate, collide or collapse,

always responding locally without a tasteful sense of the compositional four sides of the canvas, which seems to serve only as the sheet of paper needed to record any information. The technique is what happens as well as happening, supporting its own identity and individual quality, but remaining as vulnerable as the sign it defines. One can be aware in a painter like Fahlström of the probable frustration he experiences in not being able to extend the scale of his signs to invisibility and continue. The use of the familiar is obscure, the use of the exotic is fam-

iliar. Neither sacrifices completely its origin, but the mind has to travel to follow just as the eye has to change to focus. In the end a viewed painting has been an invitation, not a command, but painted in such a way that it cannot be seen unless the rules of the concept are admitted. There is no separation between the literal and literary. No competition exists between the physical character of the materials and the function of the signs. Both remain lively impure.

New York, October 1961

Pontus Hultén: Fahlström in Wonderland

Öyvind Fahlström's pictures represent a world built on moral concepts. Characters living in this world act in accordance with rules or break the rules. Fahlström is a man to whom questions of good and evil, right and wrong, are decisive. That someone in a given situation is not following the rules, or is forced to do so, is to him extremely interesting.

Fahlström creates in every picture a world of his own; he is simultaneously a capricious creator and evil executioner, director, lawmaker, policeman. In these worlds live and die beings brought into existence by Fahlström's imagination, beings that struggle and love. They move and multiply, often entirely independent of each other, not only in space but also in time. Fahlström's pictures portray highly dramatic situations; the most important fig-

ures recur, are transformed by the events they are exposed to, and appear in new forms and disguises.

Fahlström has developed this literary game of pictorial forms to the extreme. A wild, black, violent comedy is derived from the play of circumstances. What might happen, resembles, for instance, the scene that Carroll gives in *Alice in Wonderland* of the Queen's croquet lawn, where croquet is played with hedgehogs for balls and flamingos turned upside down for mallets: "The players all played at one time, without waiting for turns, quarrelling all the while, and fighting for the hedgehogs; and in a very short time the Queen was in a furious passion, and went stamping about and shouting: 'Off with his head!' or 'Off with her head!' about once a minute." The strong spatial and plastic effect that Fahlström's pictures

possess is, to Fahlström, a secondary result. As can be discerned, Fahlström's work has gone through a slow, continuous development. Changes in his imagery are conditioned by the movement his world depicts; his art reflects a clear picture of the changes in his attitude towards life. In the fifties when Fahlström lived in Europe, his art was introspective, meditative, and reserved. Since his arrival in New York in 1961, his work tends to become more open and receptive, even directly engaged in political and social events. He makes use of the same method of description previously achieved. As early as 1958 he had begun to stock his pictures with figures composed of fragments from comic strips. In the United States, Fahlström adopts more and more ingredients of pop-culture. The mythology of comic strips, politics, television, and the record industry is transformed, absorbed and assimilated into his work. Apparently Fahlström is attracted also by the uncompromising moralism of the POP world.

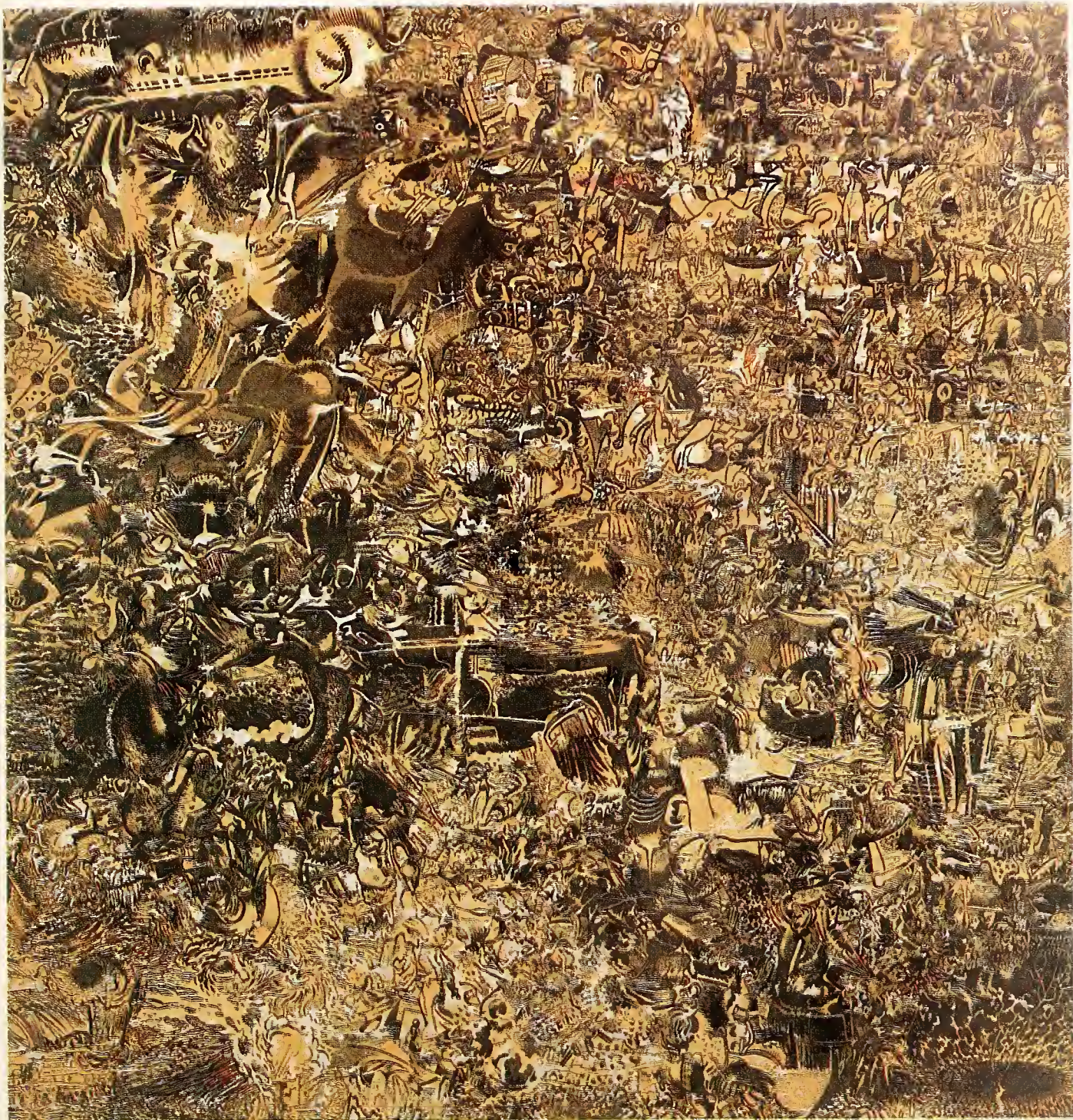
A striking mixture of pictorial, literary, and mythological elements distinguish Fahlström's art. He engages the media of modern science, politics and journalism in his art and employs them in his most recent work, as for example in *Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission*. Segments of this picture hang free in space and, as in some of his earlier two-dimensional pictures, may be fastened to each other with magnets. Painting has abandoned its place on the wall and becomes also theater, a game and psychodrama.

1966

Untitled. 1958

Pastel and lacquer on paper,
20½ × 26¾" (52 × 67 cm.)
Private Collection





Dr. Livingstone, I presume I. 1959

Collage and tempera on paper, 15⁹/₁₆ × 14¹⁵/₁₆" (39.5 × 38 cm.)

Private Collection, Los Angeles



Klara. 1960

Tempera and oil on paper mounted on canvas, 17 $\frac{5}{16}$ × 24" (44 × 61 cm.)

Collection Anna Lena Wibom, Lidingö

Matta:

When Öyvind came into the picture the picture was *all* misinterpretation of "ready-mades," "automatism" or "abstract answers."

He put it all together and "they" had to accept him because they needed some alibi against the temptation of

vogue, facility and success, etc.

They didn't understand Öyvind's resistance

They choose to love him instead
The point is to see the world, the whole world, nothing but the world

if not, poetry loses the power of its own future

And as everyone "is" potentially, a poet, we can reinvent our world that keeps growing always in complexity

L'ENTREE EST LA SORTIE

April 1979

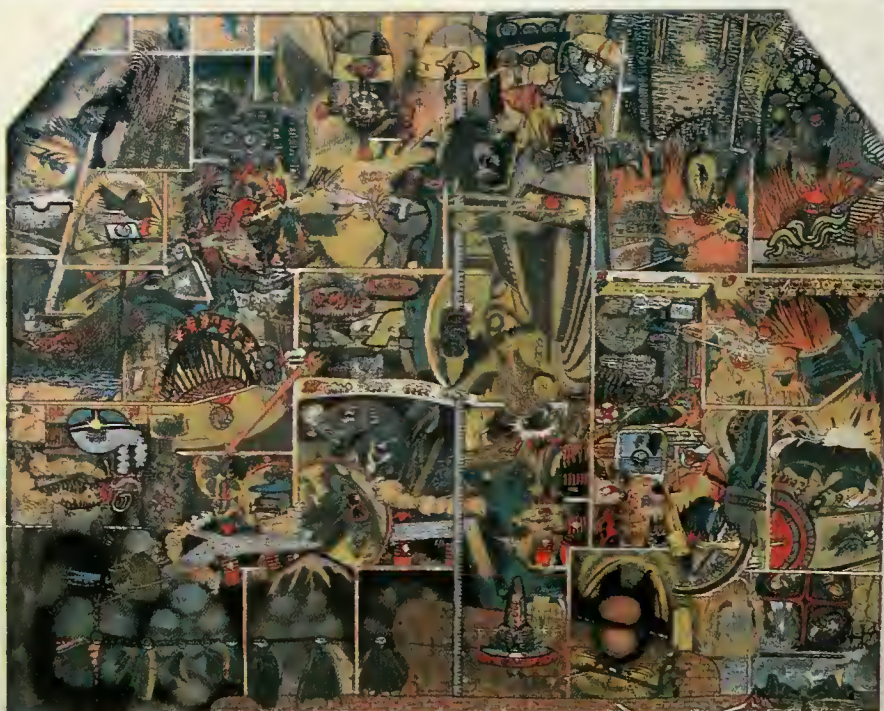
Billy Klüver: Ö.F.

Öyvind Fahlström has lived for three years in New York, where he works in an artist's loft around the corner from Wall Street, down by the old docks. He had his first contact with the New York public with the showing of *Sitting . . .* at the New Realist exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery in November 1962. This extraordinary painting was again shown at his exhibition at the Cordier Ekstrom Gallery in January 1964. *Sitting . . .* has the form of a double-page spread in a comic book and is based on a small collage of elements from comic strips; yet Fahlström does not make use of the comic strip as a means to determine the form of the painting, as does Roy Lichtenstein. The comic-strip elements are combined with groups of signs or character-forms which are the actors in a series of events which develop from frame to frame. In *Ade-Ledic-Nander II* (1957) which was also shown at the Cordier Ekstrom exhibition, the unity of the picture was already fragmented into events of the character-forms. The enormous multiplicity and the absence of evident order forces the spectator to understand the picture as a number of relationships or situations which (much like the pieces in a domino game) can be combined in different ways depending on how one travels in the picture. Fahlström wants to bring forth connections that act like the rules

in a game on the basis of the situations in which the character-forms and the comic-strip elements occur. It is inherent in Fahlström's use of the sign that the figurative as well as non-figurative forms are accepted as equal in the same way as all materials and their meanings are accepted as valid by the Americans since Rauschenberg and Johns. These Cage-inspired artists are, however, opposed to the idea of creating connections which Fahlström does deliberately. The next step for Fahlström occurs in *Sitting . . . Six months later*, where he not only lets the combination and the construction of the different situations happen in the imagination of the spectator but also on the picture surface itself. He achieves this by making the signs and the figurative forms cutout and painted silhouettes which, by means of attached magnets, can be moved and placed on certain parts of the picture. There is now an increase in the number of degrees of freedom within which the spectator can change the appearance of the picture. Fahlström does not see any significant difference between the physical interference of the spectator and the usual situation where the spectator transforms the picture only in his imagination. In the large painting *Planetarium* the rules have been simplified so that the spectator can dress forty-two figures, arranged in groups, with ninety-

four magnetized garments. These garments are all taken from actual garments in comic strips and many of them have movable joints so that they can conform to the different positions of the figures. As in previous paintings one group of picture elements assigns roles to another group; in the painting based on the Krazy Kat comic strip every sign thus "acts" as a character in the comic strip. In the same way the garments give a variety of roles to the figures, and every garment in turn represents a word (on a movable square in the corresponding color) in a conversation which is transformed as the garments are placed on different figures. Fahlström's last work, *The Cold War*, is a completely transformable painting. It consists of two large white surfaces where the magnetized elements can be attached at any place. The elements are figurative images or painted cutouts from comic strips. The initial rules for the transformations of the painting are given by the artist. The physicality of *The Cold War*, manifested by the suggestive choice of elements and the ease with which they can be moved, makes it an immediate and exciting painting. However, the complexity of the painting is such that only an intensive search can reveal the rules according to which it can or should be played.

1964



Study for "Sitting . . .". 1962
 Ink, watercolor and collage, 14⁷/₁₆ × 18¹/₈" (37 × 46 cm.)
 Collection Jasper Johns
 Photo: Eric Pollitzer

Erró:

This spring I had breakfast in a diner called "Empire" on tenth Avenue. It was seven o'clock in the morning and New York is always very special in early morning. And I remembered the sixties, getting home from these loft parties. In my bed I started thinking of talks we had a long time ago about art, preserving artists to an old age, the concentration, the meditation or the privacy (silence) most of us need for working. Then all of that falls apart. As I remembered you working with the television on just in front of your working table and having a bamboo stick to turn off the sound when com-

mercials were shown. I thought of Renoir who continued painting for years after he was crippled by arthritis, the brush had to be strapped to his arm. Then Goya, who at the age of seventy-eight escaped the terror in Spain and ended up in Bordeaux. He was deaf and his eyes were failing. In order to be able to work he had to wear several pairs of glasses, one over another, and also used a magnifying glass. He was painting superb works in a new style.

We discussed Rubens's factory in Antwerp and how the assistants, students and fellow artists, often worked on the same painting. Then you spoke

about the privilege of being a painter, not having fixed working hours and being able to organize our time freely. Many of us find the solution very easily but for you even mixing the colors took hours and nothing was ever easy.

But somehow the results are always very exciting. And as you know you are one of my favourite painters.

Now the spring is coming and I am sure I will find you on the corner of Seine and Rue de Buci like so often before. Or we could meet on the Green Hill which must be somewhere between heaven and h...

1979



Sitting . . . 1962

Tempera on paper mounted on canvas, 62 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 79 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (159 × 201 cm.)

Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm

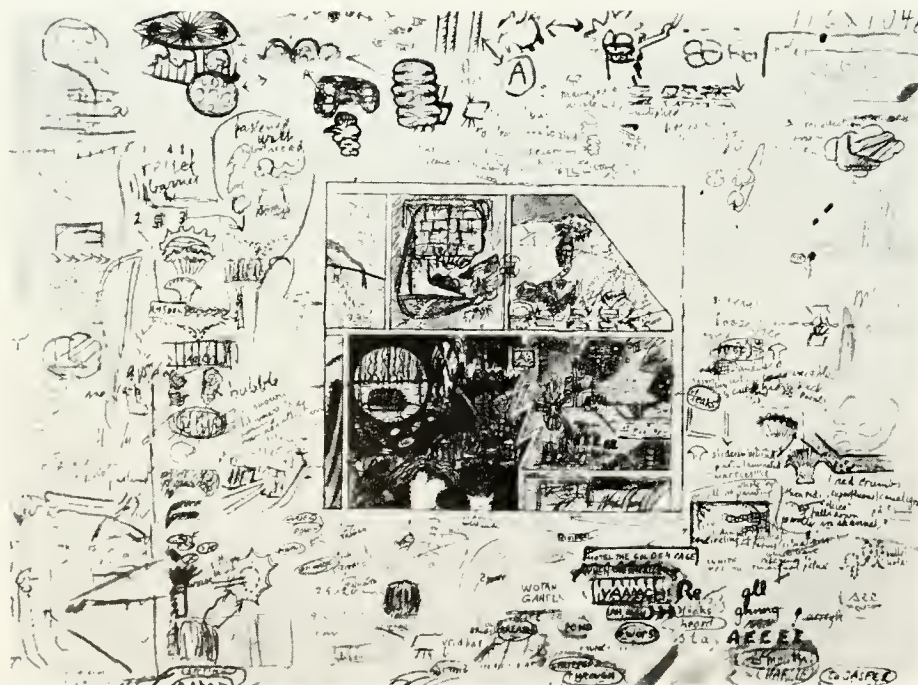


Notes for "Sitting . . . Six months later." 1962

Ink and watercolor on paper,
22 1/16 x 45 7/8" (56 x 116.5 cm.)

Collection Jasper Johns

Photo: Eric Pollitzer



Notes for "Sitting . . . Six months later." 1962

Ink and watercolor on paper,
8 1/16 x 11" (22 x 28 cm.)

Collection Jasper Johns

Photo: Eric Pollitzer



Sitting . . . Six months later, Version A. 1962

Variable painting with 18 movable elements, tempera on paper mounted on canvas,
22 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 45 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (56 × 116.5 cm.)

Collection Emil Söderström, Bromma

Ö.F.: Manipulating The World

In my variable pictures the emphasis on the "character" or "type" of an element is achieved materially by cutting out a silhouette in plastic and sheet iron. The type then becomes fixed and tangible, almost "live" as an object, yet flat as a painting. Equipped with magnets, these cutouts can be juxtaposed, superposed, inserted, suspended. They can slide along grooves, fold laterally through joints, and frontally through hinges. They can also be bent and riveted to permanent three-dimensional forms.

These elements, while materially fixed, achieve their character-identity

only when they are put together; their character changes with each new arrangement. The arrangement grows out of a combination of the rules (the chance factor) and my intentions, and is shown in a "score" or "scenario" (in the form of drawings, photographs or small paintings). The isolated elements are thus not paintings, but machinery to make paintings. Picture-organ.

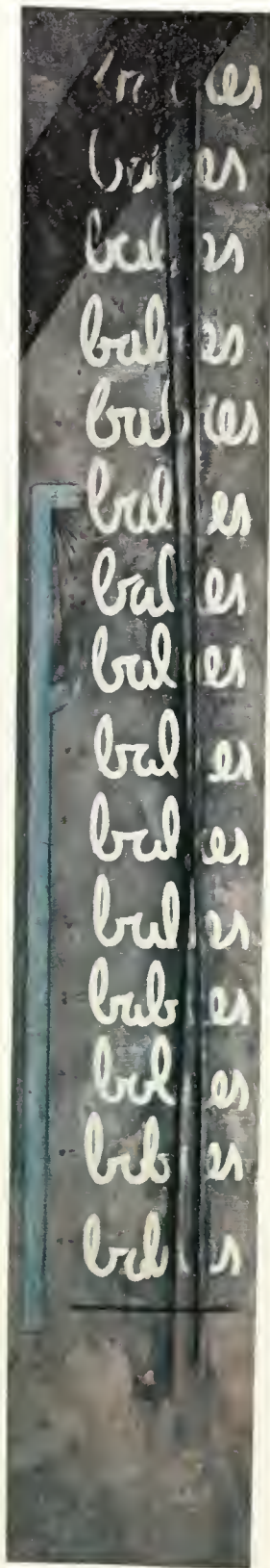
The finished picture stands somewhere in the intersection of paintings, games (type Monopoly and war games) and puppet theater.

Just as the cut-out materializes the types, the factor of time in painting

becomes material through the many, in principle infinite, phases in which the elements will appear. As earlier, in my "world" pictures such as *Ade-Ledic-Nander* and *Sitting . . .* a form would be painted on ten different places on the canvas, now it may be arranged in ten different ways during a period of time.

The role of the spectator as a performer of the picture-game will become meaningful as soon as these works can be multiplied into a large number of replicas, so that anyone interested can have a picture machine in his home and "manipulate the world" according to either his or my choices.

1964



Ö.F.: After Happenings

In the fifties I wrote a few stage plays and the scripts of a radio play and a TV film. I was attempting in these plays to organize the plot as a game structure: the more or less irrational plot elements and situation presented in the first scene determined, or could be seen as “rules” for, everything that was going to happen in the scenes that followed.

In 1961, before I went to the USA, I was planning a “musical theater” production with Fylkingen, a project which was realized the following year with *Aida* (if realized is the right word, when one thinks of the incoherent production).

I was impressed then as I was again later by what I saw in New York, but the methods of our fellow-creators of Happenings in America in making a theatrical event out of the act of painting were not on the whole what I was interested in. On the other hand I have found many points of contact with the new dramatic dance which has grown up in New York over the last two years: Rainer, Morris, Rauschenberg, Hay, Childs.

In *Aida* and *Birds in Sweden*, and in 1964 in *Beer* and *Fahlström's Corner*, and this year in the “sound film” for radio *Holy Torsten Nilsson*, I was trying to find a form which had the irrational juxtapositions of music and melodrama found in opera; the rhythmic processional order of Mystery plays or initiation ceremonies with

their sudden unexplained cathartic “revelations”; and the topicality, the focus on personality and the repeated switching from idol to supporting cast to entranced audience in revues and TV variety shows.

In the performances, I devised sound and music more than visual elements; worked more with illusion (projection, textual reference, gestures) than with tangible matter; with a complicated overall form and kaleidoscopic profusion of motifs. I also had ideas about manipulating people (identities, parapsychology), manipulating events (the same events subjected to various different actions: continuity, sequence, tempo), and manipulating the audience (mass-suggestion, indirect participation). At the same time I wanted to use present-day real events and people as “independent” living material, without tendentious purpose: Thalidomide children, the Swedish Crown Prince,

Yves Klein, alcohol licensing laws, the Tingsten-Lagercrantz controversy, Tjorven, Ingrid Thulin, Rodius, Carlo Derkert, the Top Ten, Swedish politicians, etc.

The most striking impression I had from New York was: enterprise! That one could get something going oneself, instead of waiting to be taken up by the theater. Getting started on various forms of primitive theater work also meant that I was becoming a man of action after years of sedentary painting, introverted isolation. And the additional satisfaction of appearing in person myself, if only on a very modest scale. But the disadvantages are immense: the huge outlay of time needed to achieve a single performance of pre-dress-rehearsal standard.

Of course we do not now have any choice. “Fringe theater” in all its forms has clearly only just begun to exploit its possibilities. Nevertheless it will

Ö. F. in his happening “Mellanöl,” Moderna Museet, 13 September 1966.
Photo: Hans Malmberg



◀ Babies for Africa. 1963

Variable painting in two parts, tempera and magnetic elements, $72\frac{1}{16} \times 11\frac{1}{16}$, $72\frac{1}{16} \times 44\frac{1}{8}$ " (183×29 , 183×112 cm.)
Abrams Family Collection, New York
Photo: Harry Shunk

probably start gradually satisfying other needs rather than presenting first-class productions of important radical plays. That function will be taken over by established institutions as they are gradually infiltrated by the techniques and styles, the aesthetics and philosophy of life, that are fundamental to the Happening phenomenon. I am thinking primarily of theater and film. But even the revitalization of opera, or its replacement, may have a part to play. What up to now has been an "uncomfortable" combination of music and action will now be a strength, a tempting eldorado for poetry and madness! The supreme feeling of bliss when music and action merge and together raise the climax to another level. I have tried to attain a renewal of that technique in *Birds in Sweden*, *Aida* and *Fahlström's Corner*. At the same time, opera demonstrates the "amorality" of art, its readiness to profit from and transform into art anything at all to stimulate and broaden our self-awareness: torture accompanied by *bel canto* in *Tosca*. (Self-awareness which in turn can or need not be made to serve a political end.) But we need not confine ourselves to musical drama to play with contradictions. Indeed, Peter Brook has described Shakespeare's works as a "theater of inconsistency," and his era as an unrivalled background for that kind of theater. Since then there has certainly never been such a period as the present, when the theater has spread over such wide fields, and when it should thus itself be able to reap the benefits of that diversification.

It must be acceptable for instance to deal with what seems important and topical without having to conform to Brecht's shrewd, didactic world, however expertly devised that may be; to create drama that *concerns itself with*



Claes Oldenburg:

Photos from *Nekropolis II* in 1962, when Öyvind played one of the "relatives" along with Irene Fornes (the playwright), Mariola Moyano, Milet Andreyevich (a painter), Lucas Samaras et al. Each "relative" spoke a different language at the table, and Öyvind

unfolded a huge map of the universe. Much of the action took place in extreme slow motion and it ended with the "relatives" covering their faces with aluminum foil. Later they were involved in a fight with "bears" and it all ended in destruction....



the present-day world, but is entirely unfettered by rational argument. Just as in the game-poem *Memorandum* and in my game-and-puppet-theater paintings I deal with the universe, with nuclear arsenals, with war in East Asia, and so on, as significant *facts*, and as specific manifestations on whose “immutable” form I can have an opinion—so, in the same way, I must be able to write about, let us say, utopian models of society, Swedish politicians, or an Ö.F. Happening in Peking (as I did in *Holy Torsten Nilsson*), without being a debater, reporter, psychologist or moralist. There does not even need to be a contradiction in starting from the basis of a value-judgement, that is to say both presenting a partisan documentary and also exploiting in every way the theatrical qualities inherent in the events depicted.

A purely documentary presentation of events is obviously only one method, and one of the least important methods, of presenting one’s material. Nor is there any contradiction—nor any descent into “irresponsible games”—if events are re-worked, distorted, changed beyond all recognition. The artist *is not answerable to events*, but only to himself as an artist. Thus I need not be afraid, for instance, of using the exact words of answers given in an American radio interview with a man who had had a sex-change operation, or of letting the female interviewer utter a high-pitched melisma instead of—and for exactly the same length of time as—what she actually said. (This happens in the one-act play *Christmas 1965—The Brothers Strindberg—Two Interviews*, published in *Dialog*, no. 1. This is also an example of how plot and music can be combined.)

A more complicated intervention is, for example, allowing a scene from

Strindberg’s *To Damascus* to infiltrate every vicissitude in a poor Frenchwoman’s life. (*The Brothers Strindberg*).¹

Material which is important for life can be found everywhere and is recognizable by its uncorrupted nature. Many phenomena have been corrupted by being used so often for demagogic, didactic, aesthetic or satirical purposes.

The tragic element in the situation of the Stranger in Strindberg’s *To Damascus* is the contrived, hothouse misery of literature (no less intensely felt for that). The Frenchwoman’s misfortunes (in *The Brothers Strindberg*) are the raw unresilient misfortunes with which one is inflicted: destitution, slave-labor, illness, violence, loneliness. Hence my juxtaposition. Or Hammarskjöld—Greta Garbo and the pensioner couple in *Hammarskjöld on God*.

The paralytic in literature is certainly haunting when, as in Beckett’s works, he withers away in a drooling limbo; the paralytic in life is someone who has to have the excrement extracted from his bowels every week. Drama nowadays is full of the exploration of neurotic identifications and role-fixations, but in life there are those (as in the above-mentioned case of sex-change) for whom neurotic role-awareness becomes a matter of heartrending seriousness, and is turned into living reality.

The juxtapositions of life/art, event/intervention, fact/delirious inspiration, mean something totally different from “collage,” “anything goes with anything,” and the like. They are very rare finds, they are more like what Koestler in his new book calls “*bisociation*”—when one has an element A and finds an element B, and there is a violent spark when one rubs A against B! That is to say that the result is com-

pletely different from and much greater than the sum of the two parts. Thus for me the fascination of Weiss’s Marat play resides in a double bisociation: the French Revolution and the mental asylum of Charenton in the early nineteenth century—and Marat and the Marquis de Sade.

In *Aida* I make Bengt Emil Johnson, identified by a projector image as “Bo Nilsson,” play on Vivvi Roos, designated as a “cello.” Then I have also got something resilient, a springboard, something which delimits *and* provides new ideas. There is nothing arbitrary about the “music” emanating from the girl as cello: shrieks, droning, coloratura, grunts, humming, etc., depending on what parts of her and how hard he strokes. Eroticism and drama, music and plot, have been bisociated. Rules have been drawn up and a game (the indeterminate against the necessary) has been evolved.

At the end of my poem-for-radio *Birds in Sweden*, I “translate” (imitate) the rhymes from Poe’s *The Raven* by groups of onomatopoetic words from American comics. These in their turn take on the pattern of a game: they are “translated” back into the (real) sounds they represent.

All kinds of patterns which obtrude themselves from the outside world are useful as stimuli to break out of the closed circles of subjectivity. Not just occurrences in life: it has long been my dream to be able to make use of a film production—a Swedish film of country life, an Italian historical-mythological color production—so that when setting, scenery, actors, costumes, technical equipment are already there, they can all be exploited; even dialogue and elements of the plot. With only small, superficial changes, one would be able to get (and very cheaply too) not only *Elvira Madigan*, but a *Para-Elvira*

Madigan, not only *Son of Hercules*, but a *Son of Hercules* on Burroughs's level of confusion and madness. And long, empty mumbling, and meditative sections, where everything would be treated as immense expanses of snow—hardly any sound....

It is not of paramount importance whether one should prefer a proscenium stage, with apron stage, theater-in-the-round, or large undefined rooms. With the aid of illusion, anything can be staged anywhere. There is, of course, no contradiction between illusion and reality; there is no reality which is not illusory, no illusion which is not reality. So there is something pointless about metatheater, theater within theater, theater about theater. Kenneth Brown's *The Brig*, with its "illusion" carried to the extreme,

appears innovative and daring, while the Chinese boxes in Gelber's *Connection* and *The Apple* are good old (Pirandello) tradition.

Nor do we need to fight shy of words, as in most Happenings and "musical theater." Artaud's hostility towards words can be understood against the background of the drama of the time, but the situation is different in 1965. On the one hand there are the possibilities of conveying or exactly imitating real speech: taped interviews, one's neighbor's conversation recorded by means of a hidden directional microphone (*Holy Torsten Nilsson*). On the other hand there are the possibilities of emphasizing—by the stimulating use of repetition, redistribution, extraction, distortion: the BBC's incomparable *Goon Shows*....

"Fractured psychology": characters can change personality, abruptly or imperceptibly, assume "wrong" characteristics, qualities, etc. Characters' "thoughts," free associations, etc., can be expressed or played on tape parallel with the direct dialogue. The to-and-fro responses of the theater of conversation miss, collide, chase one another, in violent changes of tempo, shifting towards action, towards "fractured" movement. The whole designed "unnaturally" to present and be a sequence of actions, not to document a stream of consciousness or the like.

Thus the scepticism of fringe theater towards the actor is redundant—only when rhythm, illusion, virtuosity, and exaggeration are prerequisites, if at all, will the implementation of a theatrical idea stand and fall with the actor.

This does not mean that theater should be limited only to its present institutions and scope. A theater inspired by Happenings which could enterprisingly and demagogically touch on sensitive areas—with alternating exceptionally "foolish," exceptionally "beautiful," and exceptionally "repugnant" sections, or similarly alternating reformulations of the same section—this kind of theater could become a political factor if it were made for and toured in Russia, China or Africa.

TV games could be changed to a mixture of game and psychodrama, with actors and personalities and people from the audience: "*Living Monopoly*." (Last spring I performed a little sketch in New York, playing various roles, in which, as Hitler, blindfolded, I stretched out an enormously elongated tongue until it touched a member of the audience, who was thus selected as *Mrs. Hitler*.)

Or on Swedish television we could regularly have *worn-out* politicians and civil servants dressed in Stockholm

Hammar skjöld on *God*, staged by *Pistolteatern*, Stockholm, 1966.
Direction: Sören Brunes. Photo: André Lafolie





The sketch "The Marriage" in the studio of Bob Morris and Yvonne Rainer, New York, March 1964.

Municipal Theater's *Winnie-the-Pooh* costumes, changing clothes from time to time and giving truthful (apolitical) answers to questions from the public.

The other line that could be followed is that of pure theater. There we should cultivate: the effect of wholeness, mystery, delirium, the theater of happiness. Isolate and act out those dizzy moments when the self is exposed to the strongest sensation of life. Something which cannot be directly de-

scribed—theater which is like the mighty vortex of Xenakis' string *glissandi*, or the aria in *Cavalleria Rusticana* piling piercing sobs one upon the other; the split-second movements (like magic tricks) in Lucinda Childs's Carnation Dance; the glimpse of nirvana when Truffaut in *Jules et Jim* cuts to a flight over a wooded mountain; the lightning, the dialogue and the resounding of the thunder-machine in Strindberg's *To Damascus*, Part II; the

mellifluous swing music in the prologue to *Goldfinger*; the deep heartbeat of the Supremes; the upsurge when consciousness hits the bottom on an LSD trip.

1965

¹ Or letting the plot in a Swedish popular comedy *The Hammarby Gang*, "program" the coup attempt against Hitler by the 20th July group; or using dialogues from old gangster and horror films to "interpret" the murder of Kennedy, as in two later plays, *Pardon, Hitler* (1968) and *Oswald Comes Back* (1967).



The Planetarium. 1963

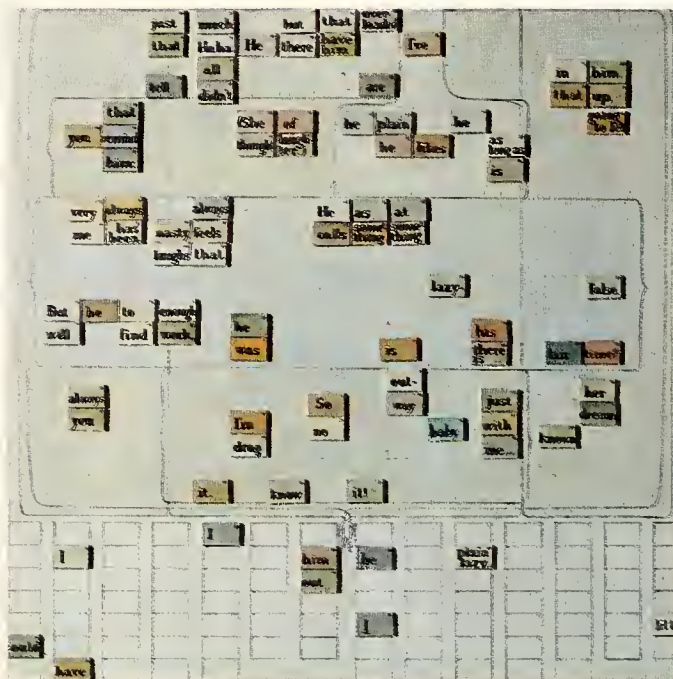
Variable diptych, tempera on 188 magnetic vinyl cutouts on canvas, 22⁷/₁₆ × 22⁷/₁₆", 77⁹/₁₆ × 92¹/₈" (57 × 57 cm., 197 × 234 cm.)

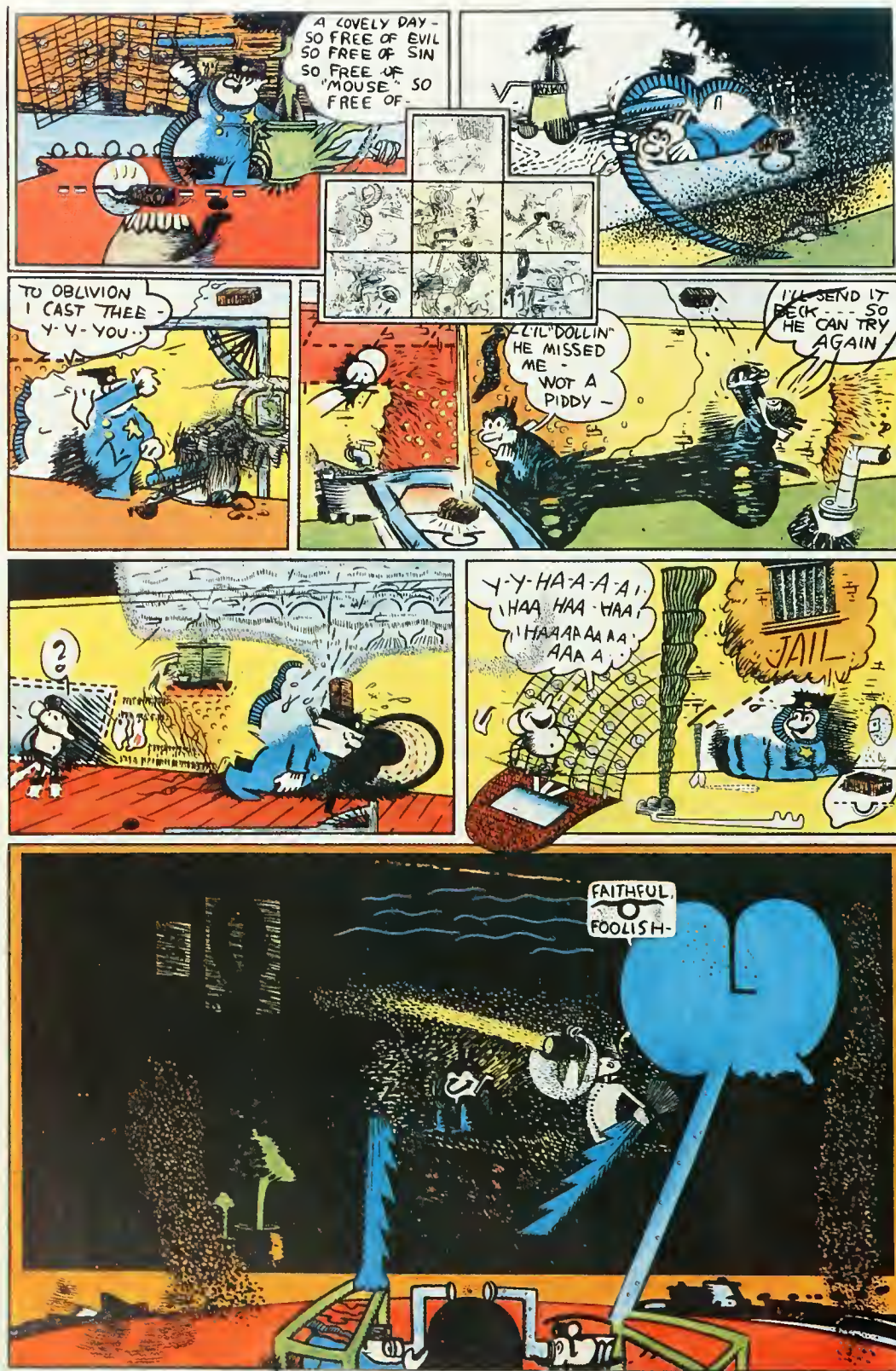
Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Photo: Oliver Baker

The Planetarium – Glossary

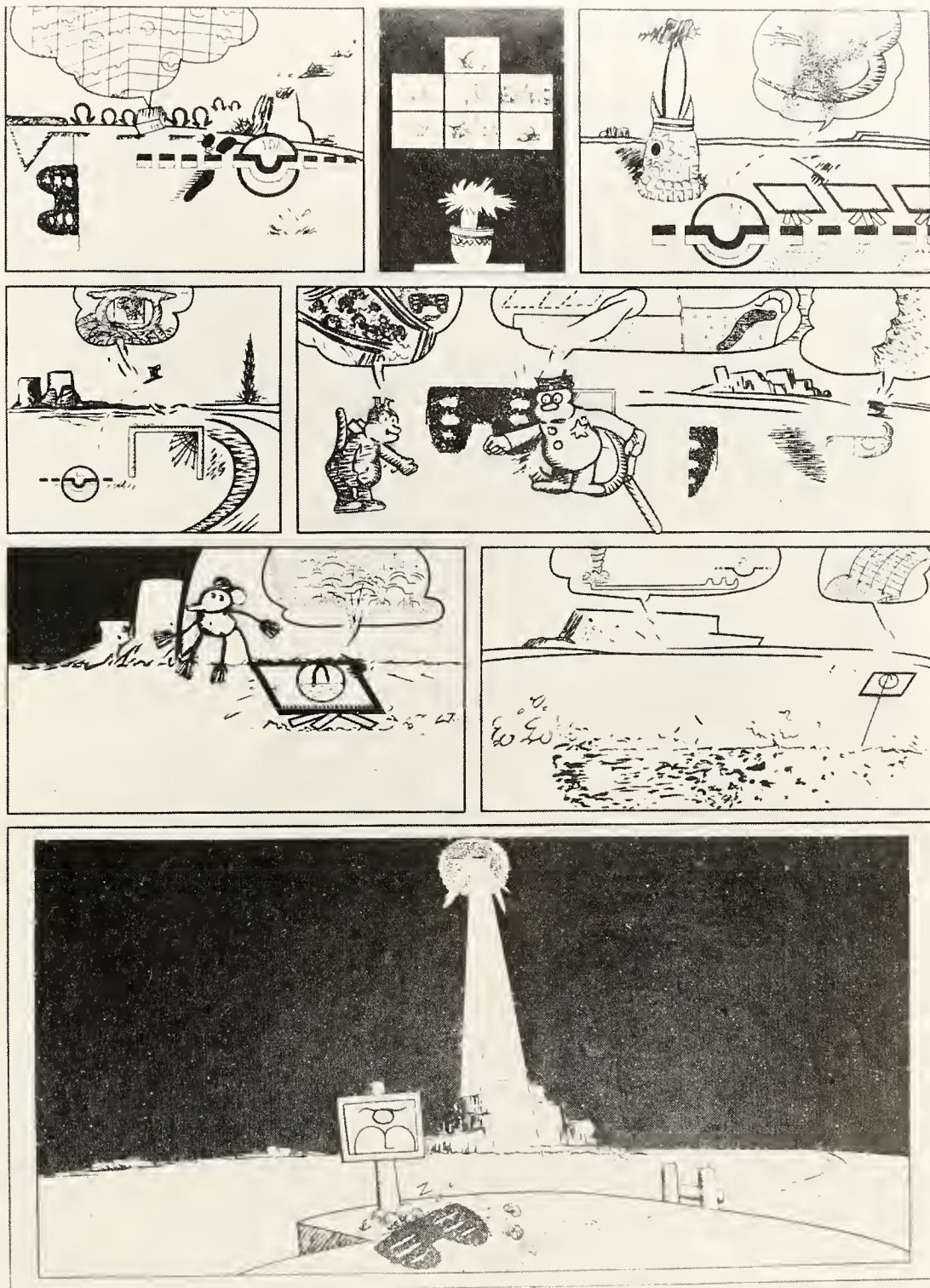
- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. So (cowboy hat) | 10. thought, (grey violet pajama pants) | 19. always (grey green hat) |
| 2. that (orange pajama shirt) | 11. that (green scarf) | 20. overloaded (black blindfold) |
| 3. was (yellow brown pants) | 12. he (dark grey violet jacket) | 21. with (golden necklace) |
| 4. all (green yellow T-shirt) | 13. didn't (light grey pants) | 22. work, (olive gray trench-coat) |
| 5. he (brown shirt, short sleeves) | 14. have (orange pajama pants) | 23. he (grey green shirt, braces) |
| 6. could (olive grey pants) | 15. enough (head bandage) | 24. has been, (green pants, burning) |
| 7. dream (dark green grey shorts) | 16. time? (orange red dressing gown) | 25. as long as (mirror necklace) |
| 8. up, (deep red hat with feather) | 17. He (striped ochre jacket) | 26. I've (red blouse, torn sleeve) |
| 9. I (grey violet pajama blouse) | 18. is (violet-green-red slacks) | 27. known (light green skirt, orange dots) |

28. him. (green sweater, handbag)
29. I (dear blue blouse)
30. know (light green skirt, tattered, safety-pin)
31. that (white beard)
32. he (red violet jacket, carnation)
33. likes (light brown pants, belt hanging)
34. me (grey violet blouse)
35. very (red beret)
36. much (grey brown hat)
37. but (tropic helmet)
38. there is (bathing trunks, red)
39. no (white athletic shirt)
40. way (rose dressing-gown)
41. to (white napkin tied round neck)
42. drag (faded blue jeans, shadow dog's head)
43. him (deep red sweater)
44. out (green cap)
45. of (orange kerchief)
46. his (orange brown sport's jacket, bullet hole)
47. lair, (ragged dark green brown coat)
48. as (pale blue spit)
49. he (grey blue shirt, flies)
50. calls (brown pants, package in pocket)
51. it. (orange red sweater)
52. I (black bathing suit)
53. always (straw hat, red ribbon)
54. tell (prison-grey pants, one leg short)
55. him: (grey prison-shirt)
56. baby, (light green laboratory coat)
57. you (faded brown T-shirt, braces)
58. are (grey blue jeans, patched)
59. just (black scarf)
60. plain (black mask)
61. lazy - (blue violet veil)
62. just (maid's cap)
63. plain lazy. . . (pink mask with veil)
64. He (white shirt, smoke)
65. always (blue knitted cap)
66. laughs (white pants, wheel imprints)
67. at (doctor's "head mirror")
68. that. (doctor's white coat, hand imprints)
69. But (doctor's white cap)
70. he (doctor's white coat, stethoscope)
71. will (grey blue pants, torn)
72. find (white skirt, blood-stained)
73. out- (nurse's white cap)
74. you (brown ochre jacket, stretched out)
75. remind (ultramarine blue pants, fly open)
76. me . . . (grey pink T-shirt, shadow arm)
77. I'm (ochre bodice, handkerchief)
78. going to let (ochre skirt)
79. him have (light yellow trunks)
80. it! (orange jacket, dirty shirt)
81. Ha, ha . . . (black umbrella)
82. (She (violet bodice)
83. feels (apron, broom)
84. that (smoke-cloud)
85. there ("breast plate")
86. is (red violet skirt)
87. something (red bra)
88. false, (gag)
89. something (dark ochre sport's jacket, handcuffs)
90. nasty (robber's handkerchief)
91. in (bubble gum)
92. her (pink blouse, sweat stains)
93. little (doctor's mask)
94. laughter.) (light yellow slip)





Performing K. K. No. 2
(Sunday Edition). 1963-64
Tempera on paper mounted on
canvas, 52 x 33 7/8"
(132 x 86 cm.)
Courtesy Sidney Janis Gallery,
New York



Performing K. K. No. 3.
 1965
 Oil and collage on canvas
 with four movable magnetized
 parts, $54\frac{1}{2} \times 36\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{5}{16}$ "
 (138.5 × 93 × 5 cm.)
 Collection
 Robert Rauschenberg

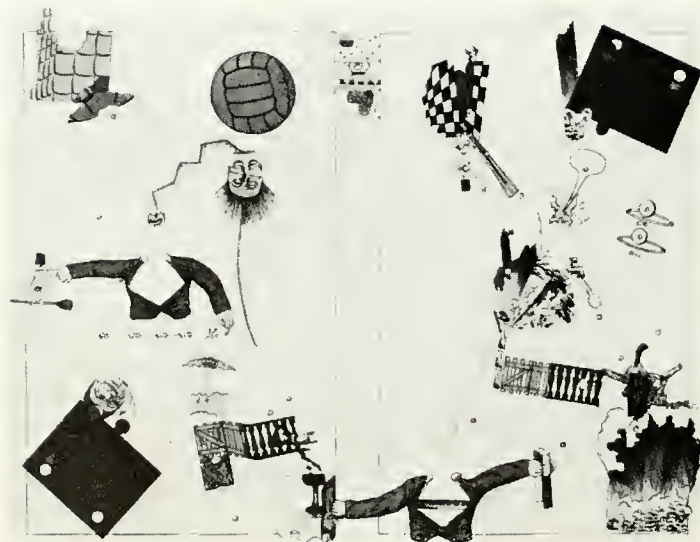


The Cold War. 1963
Phase 4



Phase 5

Phase 6



Phase 7



Detail of *The Cold War*. 1963–1965
Variable diptych, tempera on steel and plastic, 94½ × 118⅞" (240 × 300 cm.)
Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Photo: Oliver Baker



Ö.F.:

Games – from “Sausages and Tweezers – A Running Commentary.”

A game in its most universal meaning requires only one thing: rules. A player at a slot machine can be a single person; two competing; twenty competing; or twenty playing individually.

My basic interpretation of the concept of a game—and my artistic use of it—is therefore not evolved from the strategy theories of Neumann, Herman Kahn, etc. I am more inclined to refer to Cage’s method of composition, and psychologists such as T. Leary and E. Berne. But above all, the idea of a game for me is a simple, fundamental outlook on life, dating back to the time of my *Concrete Manifesto* (1953).

The most basic “rules” are the immutability of the magnetic objects in

terms of color, size, shape, collapsibility and so on, together with their implied open meaning. Less exact rules apply, as in *The Cold War*, when for instance the objects consist of pairs, or companion pieces—what I do with A has significance for A¹, wherever A¹ is located. (Model for balance of terror.)

Also in some of the paintings, *The Planetarium*, *Dr. Schweitzer’s Last Mission*, *Switchboard*, *Sitting . . .*, *Dominoes*, *Roulette*, etc., there are rudimentary rules (of the jigsaw puzzle type) which in their turn contravene the rules of the magnetic objects’ invariables and the player’s variables.

The fundamental principle for game-paintings, however, is the confront-

tation between freedom of variation and the arbitrary immutability of appearance, substance and construction. Hence my interest in signs, i.e. type-faces, and in objects as shapes.

Whatever might go on elsewhere, in the many-thousand-year here-and-now of this planet, the appearance of a hand is immutably something jointed, flat, with five extended parts. Not a sphere. As well as being less interested in nuances and ambiguity when applied to matters concerning life, I am equally unconcerned about whether some hands have four fingers, or whether some hands are larger and others smaller.

The decisive factor is that I as an “artist,” and I and others as “human beings,” are at every moment of our lives coming up against what we see as the *absolute rigidity* of appearances, and adjusting our own variation-possibilities accordingly. There is here a fundamental and inexhaustible tension.

Without manipulating works of art one can hardly realize the fantastic range of the astronomical freedom of choice and the immense rigidity in the external appearance of the parts—and in the material they are made of: the combination of metal and plastic makes shapes as strong as axes.

Then after that fundamental fact comes the fragile rigidity of the other rules—like our conventions and agreements: the border between the Congo and Angola, the numbers in the telephone book, the buttoning of jackets. The tension lies in the fact that it is possible to oppose the rigidity—just as it is in my models.

Venice Biennale. 1966

Dr. Schweitzer’s Last Mission. Phase 1. 1964–66

Variable painting, tempera on 10 iron and plastic cutouts, 8 iron boxes, 50 magnetic iron and plastic cutouts, ca. 177 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 401 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 100 $\frac{3}{8}$ ” (450 × 1,020 × 255 cm.)

Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm

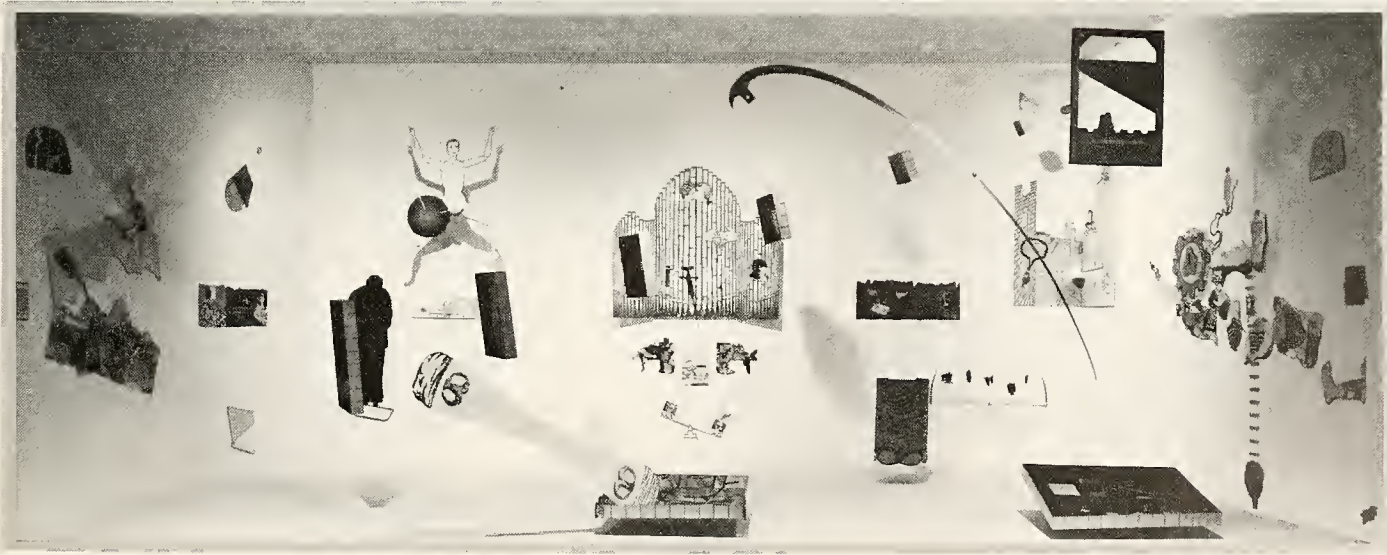


1966

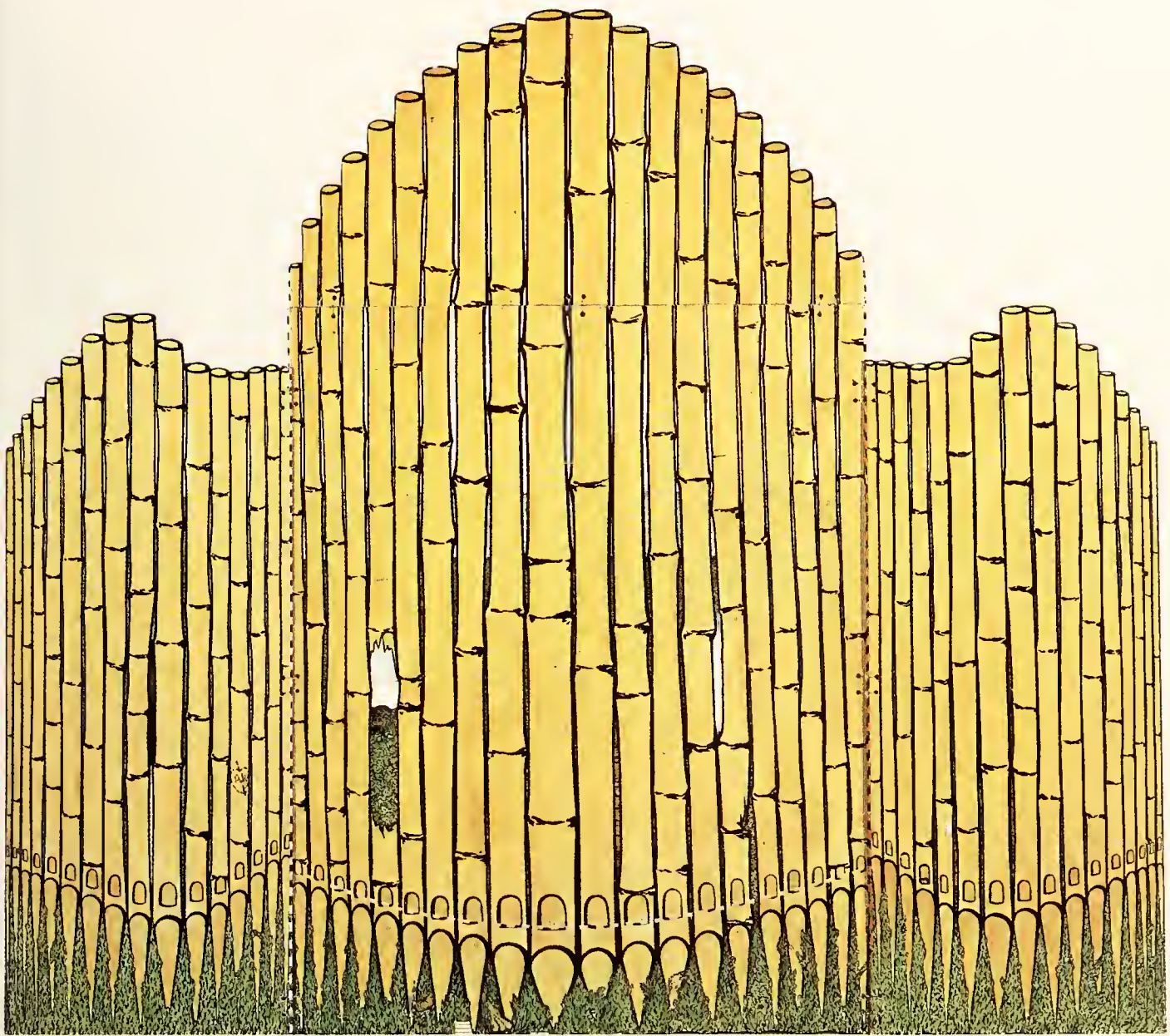


Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1973: Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission. Phase 3

Westkunst Cologne, 1981: Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission. Phase 7. Photo: Albrecht Obly







Dr. Schweitzer's organ

Detail from Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission. Phase 3



Detail from Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission



Self-Portrait, detail from Dr. Schweitzer . . .

Ö.F.: Take Care of the world

1. Art. Consider art as a way of experiencing a fusion of “pleasure” and “insight.” Reach this by impurity, or multiplicity of levels, rather than by reduction. (The fallacy of some painting, music, etc.; *satori* by mere reduction. The fewer the factors, the more they have to be “right,” “ultimate.”)

The importance of bisociation (Koestler). In paintings, factual images of erotic or political character, for example, bisociated, within a game-framework, with each other and/or

Crown Prince burning himself as a Buddhist monk. An interview with a sex-change case in both documentary and pure sound (yells).

Ultimately, the goal will be to reach “The un-natural.”

2. Games. Seen either as realistic models (not descriptions) of a life-span, of the Cold War balance, of the double-code mechanism to push the bomb button—or as freely invented rule-structures. Thus it becomes important

with “abstract” elements (character-forms) will not exclude but may incite to “meditational” experiences. These, in turn, do not exclude probing on everyday moral, social levels.

This would equally hold true for the theater. In two short plays of mine, *The Brothers Strindberg* and *Hammarskjöld on God*, performed in Stockholm, dance-like “pure” sequences are interlocked with an actual interview with an aged couple on the cost of living and a representation of the Swedish



ESSO – LSD. 1967

Plastic, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 35\frac{1}{16} \times 50"$ ($15 \times 89 \times 127$ cm.)

Edition of 5

Collection Mr. and Mrs. William H. Wise, Palm Springs, California

to stress relations (as opposed to “free form” where everything can be related to anything so that in principle nothing is related). The necessity of repetition to show that a rule functions—thus the value of space-temporal form and of variable form. The thrill of tension and resolution, of having both conflict and non-conflict (as opposed to “free form” where in principle everything is equal).

Any concept or quality can be a rule, an invariable. The high notes or yells of the sex-change interviewer in *The Brothers Strindberg* [see section 1 above], replacing and cued to the exact length of her questions, constitute a rule, as well as the form-qualities of a painted, magnetized metal cutout. The cutout is an invariable as form, outlook. As long as another element is not superimposed on it the cutout will never vary visually but its meaning will vary depending on its position. Rules oppose and derail subjectivity, loosen the imprinted circuits of the individual.

3. Multiples. Painting, sculpture, etc., today represent the most archaic art medium, depending on feudal patrons who pay exorbitantly for uniqueness and fetish magic: the “spirit” of the artist as manifested in the traces of his

brushwork or at least in his signature (Yves Klein selling air against a signed receipt in 1958).

It is time to incorporate advances in technology to create mass-produced works of art, obtainable by rich or not rich. Works where the artist puts as much quality into the conception and the manufacturer as much quality into the production, as found in the best handmade works of art. The value of variable form: you will never have exactly the same piece as your neighbor. I would like to design an extensive series of puppet games, sold by subscription, in cutout sheets; or 3-D dolls (BARBIES FOR BURROUGHS project). And robot theater: elements arrange themselves by computer programming.

4. Style. If bisociation and games are essential, style is not. Whether a painting is made in a painterly, in a hard-edge graphic or in a soft photographic manner is of secondary interest, just as documentary, melodramatic and dancelike dimensions can interweave in a play. I am not much involved in formal balance, “composition” or, in general, art that results in mere decorative coolness (art that functions primarily as rugs, upholstery, wallpaper).

Nor am I concerned with any local cute Pop or camp qualities *per se*, be they the thirties, comics, Hollywood, Americana, Parisiana, Scandinavianisms.

5. Essentials. In order to seem essential to me, a material, content or principle does not only have to attract me “emotionally,” but should concern matters that are common and fundamental to people in our time, and yet be as “fresh,” as untainted by symbolism, as possible. I deplore my incapacity to find out what is going on. To find out what life, the world, is about, in the confusion of propaganda, communications, language, time, etc.

Among the things I am curious about just now: where to find (and make a film of) the life geniuses, individuals who manage to put the highest degree of artistry (creativity, happiness, self-fulfillment) in every phase of their living. What are the relations and possibilities in art-and-technology, new media? Chemical/electrical brain stimulation and ESP. Opera-theater-happenings-dance. Europe-Russia (? China); isolate and incite the USA. Concerts (dance, music, lectures, etc. of the Cage-Rauschenberg type) in Russia. “Political” performances in China—the nonparadox of presenting the official outlook with the aesthetic conventions of New York performances, and vice versa.

6. Risk reforms. Attitude to society: not to take any of the existing systems for granted (capitalist, moderately socialized or thoroughly socialized). Refuse to presume that “sharpness” of the opposite systems will mellow into a worthwhile in-between. Discuss and otherwise influence the authorities towards trying out certain new concepts.

The reforms mentioned below are of



Roulette. 1966
 Variable painting, oil on photo-paper on vinyl and board, 59 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 70 $\frac{1}{16}$ " (150 × 178 cm.)
 Collection Museum Ludwig, Cologne
 Photo: Geoffrey Clements



Mao-Hope-March. New York, 1966

Filmed portion of performance, Kisses Sweeter than Wine, with passersby answering the question, "Are you happy?"

Ö.F. seen on left with placard of Hope

course not proposed with the huge, rigid warfare states like China, Russia or the USA in mind, but rather small welfare states like Sweden, groping for goals. The reforms are all more or less risky—which should be considered an asset; they will appear not as another series of regulations, but as events that might somewhat shake the chronic boredom of well-fed aimlessness and

shove the country in question into international prominence.

7. Arms. Complete and unilateral disarmament (apart from a small permanent force submitted to the United Nations). Small countries will soon have to make the choice between this and acquiring nuclear weaponry anyway. The risk of disarming is minimal, as

only other small countries now (or even later with nuclear arms) can be deterred. This step would, among other things, release tax-income, man- and brainpower for other reforms.

8. Terror. Instead of prisons, create forcibly secluded, but large very complete (both sexes) and very "good" communities (everyday Clubs Médi-

terranés) where offenders could gradually find satisfying ways of living without offending society. The risk would of course be the suffering of victims, with potential offenders no longer deterred (a "Tenth Victim" situation?).

Value is having to find out what makes a "good" community; corralling the discontented part of the population; finding out if punishment deters; finding out if a major part of the population will turn criminal in order to be taken care of in a closed community rather than live in the open one.

9. Utilities. Free basic food, transportation and housing paid through taxes. Risk: "No one will care to work." Value: true equality—everyone paying taxes according to what he or she earns. As opposed to the present token equality, where an apple costs differently to each buyer.

10. Profits. Steer away from redundant, self-revolving production (five to ten different companies producing the same detergent—competition mainly on the level of marketing gimmicks) by letting government agencies assign projects to the two or three most qualified bidders (like military contracts plus limited competition). What to be produced thus will be decided centrally by the country; how to produce, by the manufacturer; and how to divide the profits, by manufacturers and workers. An attempt to combine planning and incentive. The risk of less variety and lack of incentive outweighed by the chance to diminish the alienation in ordinary blindfolded work; of replacing publicity with information; and primarily to divert brain- and manpower to neglected fields like housing, pleasure, education, etc.

11. Politics. Government by experts and administrators. Delegate the shaping of policies and the control of experts to a body of "jurors" replaced automatically at given intervals, chosen from outstanding persons in all fields. Abolish politicians, parties, voting. Perhaps have referendums. Voting and active participation on regional, labor and such levels where participation is concrete and comprehensible.

Find and channel some geniuses into creative administrative and diplomatic work, instead of excluding them from such leadership. Risk: nothing can be worse than the power games on local and global levels between smalltime politicians whose sole expertise lies in acquiring and keeping power.

12. Pleasure. "The ecstatic society." Research and planning in order to develop and mass produce "art" as well as "entertainment" and drugs for greater sensory experiences and ego-insight. New concepts for concert, thea-

ter and exhibition buildings; but first of all pleasure houses for meditation, dance, fun, games and sexual relations (cf. the "psychedelic discothèque" on the West Coast, and the multiscreen discothèques of Murray the K and Andy Warhol). Utilize teleprinter, closed-circuit TV, computers, etc., to arrange contacts, sexual and other.

Incite to creative living, but also approve "passive" pleasures by means of new drugs—good drugs, i.e. strong and harmless, instead of perpetuating the use of our clumsy, inherited drugs, liquors, stimulants. Refine the activating (consciousness-expanding) new drugs. And develop euthanasia drugs to make dying easy, fast and irrevocable for terminal cases and prospective suiciders.

The risk of people not caring to work any more would be eliminated by the fact that people would have superficial benefits attractive enough to make it worthwhile to work in order to obtain them.

1966



Detail from Dr. Schweitzer . . .

Ö.F. preparing for *Kisses Sweeter than Wine* for "Nine Evenings: Theater and Engineering" at 26th Street Armory in New York. 1966. Photo: Peter Moore

Ö.F.: From Kisses Sweeter than Wine

While public gathers:

Half house lights. **Test-images.** On Slide-screen: left panel of yellow bamboo-organ (from Ö.F.'s painting *Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission*). On movie screen: film in black and white showing central panel of bamboo organ. On TV screen: right panel of organ (filmed in "rear TV-area.")

(Film is partly picked up by glass sheet.)

On white field, a 27 × 27 ft. carpet of cotton unrolled and pasted to canvas, referred to as "snowfield," eight performers are lying motionless, "invisible," covered with cotton. In the middle of the snowfield stands a screen. Behind it are concealed Sören Brunes and a lifelike dummy in frogman outfit, including goggles, gloves, fins, sitting on chair.



Part 1. Frogman

Lights lowered. Projections out. Performers discreetly blow soap bubbles.

Film: whirling snow (filmed with rotating camera). Projected through green filter.

Sören removes screen. Frogman moves arms as if floating (arms pulled marionette-wise from behind screen).

Sören shoots arrows against Frogman's head, one arrow penetrates and remains in head – in that moment:

Tape: 1/4 bar of rock-rhythm, voice snaps: "Ha!" 1/4 bar rhythm (2-second fragment of Nancy Sinatra, "Boots").

After 10–30 seconds white foam plastic, polyurethane, concealed in head of dummy (mixed by Sören while behind screen): starts flowing over Frogman's head, white soggy mass.

Tape (when overflow starts): "Kisses Sweeter than Wine," New Christy Minstrels (folk-rock, sweet-slick-beautiful, starts with whistling sequence; plus humming; plus refrain "Kisses . . .," 40 seconds in all).

Sören back, has surgeon's green rubber gloves – unhooks Frogman's arm, takes off stiffened white mass (and hooks onto thread attached to dummy's leg) – pulled in wire behind screen Frogman suddenly falls off chair and slow-

ly rises in the air, white mass “rising” with Frogman – while helium-inflated soap-bubble conglomerations rise equally slowly, like shimmering twirling short caterpillars, followed by spotlight.

Tape (until dummy and bubble forms disappear in the darkness up at the very high ceiling) – fragment of interview with dope addict, man with pseudonym “**St. Philomena**” (drowsy voice): “... it attracts me – but – eh... – but it doesn’t satisfy me when I’m on a drug – – – if you can comprehend – that sort of... well eh – – well – when, when I’m clean and I see people engrossed in the simplicity of – eh – their – interfamilial relations – ah – the simple give-and-take eh – the – in – of a father teaching his three-year-old son how to swim – and – eh a mother showing her daughter how to comb her hair and to make it look pretty – and so on – really – deriving satisfaction from this – I – oh, I hunger for that sort of thing – eh – with that relationship with anyone – and – yet – it bores me, and it – it – – frightens me in a way – I hate myself for liking it, because there are so many important things to do – and here I am yearning for something that simple...” – **Interviewer** (Charlie Hayden): “I understand that the important thing – that you are quite a follower of the arts –.” – **St. Philomena**: “ah the arts / – / sh my heart, the arts, look – the arts mean dord to me – eh – it’s – – it’s the Lord – ah, it’s the spirit – the spirit has given me a task to accomplish and I will use any means at my disposal to avoid doing my duty to the spirit – I’ll drag my heels – I’ll spit in the Lord’s eye – cut my wrists – anything, anything and every to keep from sitting down and facing who and what I am and my surroundings, When I’m clean.”

Lights lowerd / *Tape*: Ö.F. in telephone conversation with British trade Commission in Shanghai, questions about weather. Ö.F. was unable to reach party in Shanghai./

Part 2. Buxton, Demonstrators, Johnson-head

Slide: “Jedediah Buxton, born 1707, never learned to write or to do arithmetic, but he would carry complicated mathematical calculations in his head for as long as two and a half months, before coming up with the correct answer.”

TV – : Buxton-Rauschenberg, sitting straight up in chair in 18th century costume, with wig.

Ö.F. (over P.A. system): “Jedediah Buxton.”

Buxton: “Yes.”

Ö.F.: I want you to listen carefully to these numbers and we

will see if you remember them later on when I ask you for them – they are – sales: 11,471,529 and net profit: 1,035,675; sales: 2,471,988, net profit 219,272; sales: 2,442,453, profit 391,225.”

Slide: same numbers, plus listing of companies: Standard Oil (N. J.), S.O. (Ind.), S.O. (Cal.).

Slides: Esso-billboards and other ads showing Esso-tigers: American style, German Style, Swedish, Italian.

Buxton (from TV screen, he sits behind movie screen, not seen by public) looks down at public, motionless.

TV watcher comes in with chair, goes to TV set close to TV screen, turns on picture (no sound), sits back on chair, looking at TV-set picture (small as dot compared to the huge TV-projection screen). Hand in crotch, discretely masturbates (from now on). At that point: *Tape*: “Ha!” (same Nancy Sinatra fragment).

Film: fragment of documentary, in color, showing solar eruptions glowing red bursts, flames, from segment of black disk, the sun.

The people lying on “snowfield” rise, uncover picket signs consisting of large photo blowups, six showing Bob Hope’s head, one Mao Tse Tung’s – film partly projects on signs. They struggle to the left, as in storm winds.

While Demonstrators struggle out: enters Invisible Man, wrapped in smoke (clothes soaked with titanium tetrachloride).

Tape – soundtrack from horror movie, storm, winds, subdued mood music. Groaning voice (monster?). Man’s voice, distant, receding in fury of storm: “Johnson!! – Johnson!!” Fragment repeated.

Tape: bass drum roll.

Slide (in color): Indonesian Silawangi Soldier, drummer with bass drum, his back and head covered with hide and head of tiger, open mouth, fangs.

Invisible Man starts unfolding slowly rotating a 2 ft. high package, or bandaged object, standing in the middle of the “snowfield.”

Slide (in color): man’s shaved head, with grid of blue lines drawn on scroll.

Tape (heard from receiver with loudspeaker behind package): British spiritualists, 4–5 voices, man and women, more or less heavy Cockney accent: “falling asleep and waking up in a wonderful country, I think death is wonderful.” – – “In death one starts to really live.” – – “It is the passing on of our spirit into another world, and going along, eh, travelling along until you get to perfection –.”



Model for "The Little General." 1968

Tempera on vinyl, 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 60 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (76.5 x 154 x 25 cm.)

Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm



Green Seesaw. 1968-69

Variable structure, magnetic elements, oil on photograph mounted on vinyl, tempera on papier-mâché, wood and metal,
7½ × 91¾ × 28¾" (19 × 233 × 73 cm.)

Collection Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna. Photo: Geoffrey Clements



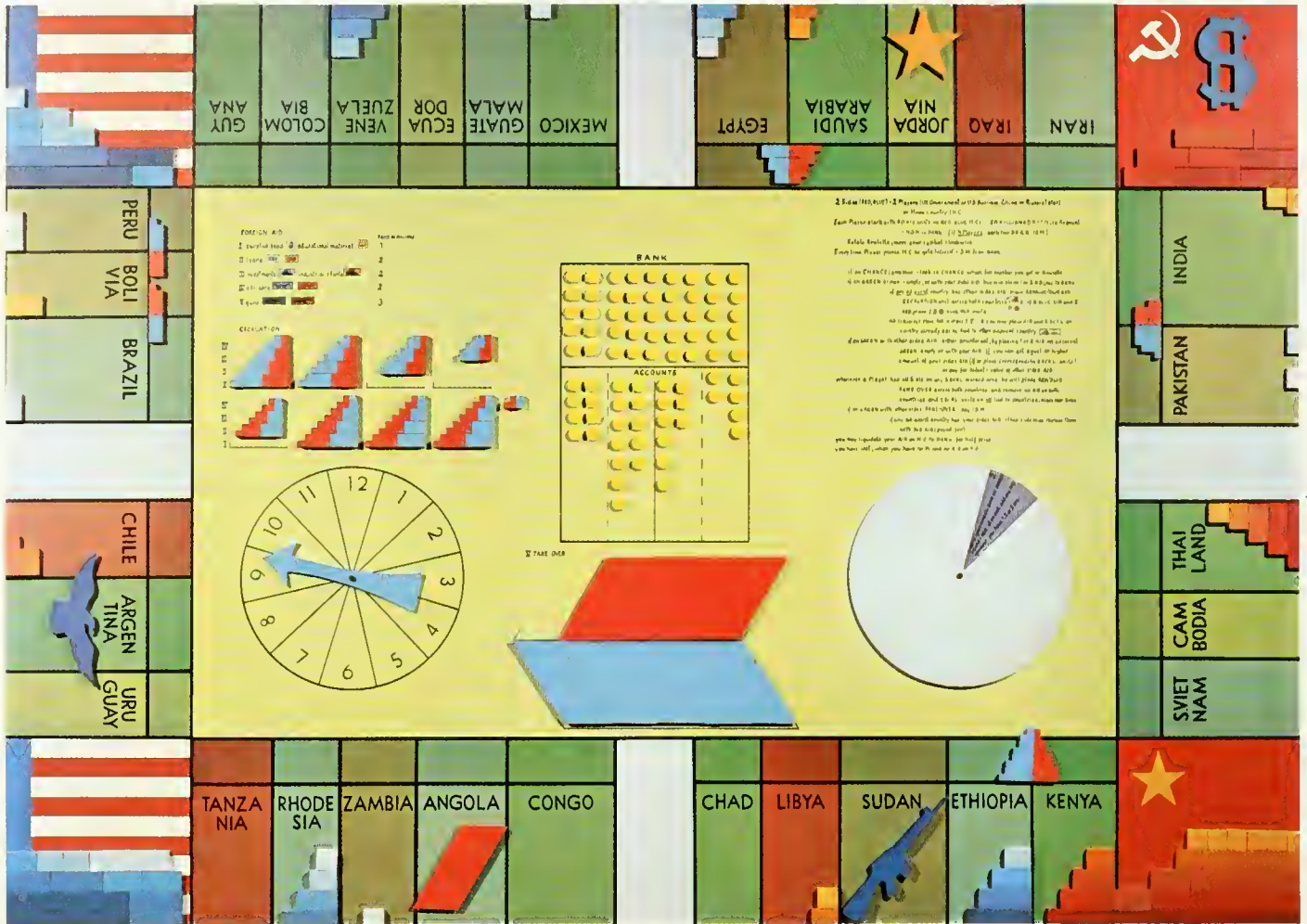
Green Power. 1969

Variable painting, magnetic elements, oil on photograph mounted on vinyl, acrylic on plastic flowers, $80\frac{5}{16} \times 64\frac{15}{16}$ " (204 × 165 cm.)
Private Collection

[illegible]



Notes 3 (Mass Elements). 1970
 Ink and acrylic on paper, 16 1/16 x 14" (42 x 35.5 cm.)
 Collection Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart



World Politics Monopoly. 1970
Variable painting, acrylic on vinyl, magnets on metal board,
36 1/4 x 50 1/4" (92 x 128 cm.). Private Collection

Ö.F.: On Monopoly games

My Monopoly game paintings consist of 200–230 painted magnetic elements on a painted metal board. They deal with world trade, world politics, the left and the right in USA, Indochina, and CIA vs. Third World liberation forces. They can all be played, according to the rules written on the paintings, as variants of the classical Monopoly game, which is of course the game of capitalism: a simplified, but precise presentation of the trading of surplus value for capital gains.

The Monopoly paintings are even

more simplified – as they deal with very complex realities – but nevertheless come out as basic **game-diagrams** of these phenomena. That is, by the way the surface is planned, by the formulation of the rules, the definition of resources (million dollar coins, or hearts = lives), tactics and other such elements, plus the additional information you get from the sectors of the **CHANCE**-wheel. Blue colors stand for USA, violet for Europe, red for Russia, yellow for China, orange for North Vietnam, etc., and the Third

World goes from brown red, over shades of green, to green blue (S. Vietnam, S. Korea, etc.).

By choosing sides and strategies the player will be involved in a miniature **political psychodrama**. The game can be played intensively in an hour with two to four participants. Or by one person, for months, while the clear colors slowly change on the surface, like a tree through the seasons.

These game paintings will only be meaningful when they have been made into mass multiple editions. 1971

Ö.F.: 2070. Notes for a Conference on Utopia¹

The present is struggle, the future is yours

These notes presuppose (1) that the world has reached a stage of surplus instead of want, and (2) that economic resources and political power have been shared among all people.

— Since want and profit motive are no longer the governing forces, attention can be concentrated more on: not which and how many goods and services are produced—but how work should be structured so that it benefits the development of the people doing it and has value for them. (cf. André Gorz on the theory that leisure activities have no meaning unless they are an extension of work.)

The intrinsic value of work—inefficiency should thus be built into production: non-uniformity, decentralization, variation which can provide a choice. Irregular working hours. Production structured increasingly as creative games, pleasurable and/or intellectually or politically stimulating. There will be many people engaged on planning and structuring work in this way. It will be one of the functions of the artist.

— The other requirement is *rotation* for those who work. Transfers, rather than lifelong tenure in one particular working role, will be regarded as the norm. The development of technology will in any case make it impossible for most people to keep up with the technology of their jobs. We should therefore move towards “superficial multi-specialization.”

Through rotation, those who work will also obtain a better overall view and be more easily able to practice self-management. All activity connected with self-management will be ranked

equal—but even in this sphere people will not be cast into roles and form a separate managerial class.

— The same applies to the management of society: computer technology can and must now be exploited, not to produce centralization and uniformity, but to deal with the complications and “inefficiency” which will arise and which can be valuable in themselves. To carry out decentralized implementation of decisions taken in principle, and surveys of experts’ conclusions. Telecommunications and computer technology will provide the opportunity for *participation in* (1) information about, (2) discussions on, and (3) the making of *decisions at all*

levels. Participation in that way in the administration of society is of course to be equated with work. Everybody will thus be engaged to a varying degree in politics—but there will be no politicians.

Likewise all types of study will be equated with work. By means of telecommunications (image-transmitting telephones), studies will be pursued partly at home, at a distance from and in contact with various institutions and workplaces. (Automation has made the problem not one of finding enough workers, but of finding enough meaningful activities for those for whom there is too little work.)

— *Free minimum living require-*

When filming Provocation Ö.F. tried to provoke the Royal Guard into action but got into trouble, 1968. Photo: Arne Jönsson



ments: accommodation, communications and basic food will be provided free for everybody, irrespective of whether they work or not. If not everything can be free for all—yet—one could envisage being credited with a certain number of “units” for work done. They would be calculated in the same way for all work, unless it were particularly risky or stressful.

The “units” could be entered (with radioactive isotopes or the like) on a card bearing invisible markings = identification. “Units” and identity would be read by a machine when one took non-free goods, services, and entertainments, while one’s account of “units” would be controlled by the computers to which all shops, institutions, and so on, would be connected. (Money,

checks and credit cards would thus be superseded.)

— Rotation requires a high degree of *mobility* not just within the workplace, but throughout the world. Distance would no longer be regarded as a hindrance. Distant places could be reached by telecommunication or by travelling, both of which are assumed to be free. Free even for those who just want to explore the world and live on their allocation of free minimum living requirements.

— The opportunities for “rotating” for certain periods to distant workplaces will be increased by the fact that one’s partner and/or children will be able to live in the *modified extended families* which constitute the home.

Most people will not live in towns (which themselves will have been broken up and decentralized). Each family will live in a small house with bedroom and workroom and simple washing and cooking facilities. House-building will have been standardized and simplified: everyone will be able to build or extend their own houses.

These *mini-houses* will form a group around an *omni-house* where there will be a communal kitchen, washing-machines, swimming pool, workshop, kennels, stables and space for children and for children and adults to be together. In principle, each extended family should establish its own multi-activity-house. Then groups of extended families can plan and build larger multi-activity-houses. But perhaps not so many houses will be needed.

— A large part of people’s creative and practical work will be allocated to the detoxification and *reconstruction* of



Filming Provocation. Demonstration in front of the Royal Palace, on Sweden’s National Flag Day, 1969.
Photo: Carl Johan De Geer

the environment. (A prerequisite will be the ability to modify temperature and weather.) Not just an attempt to make it look as before—but more beautiful, more wild, and at the same time more habitable than ever! The creation of forests, flowers, fruits, caves, ravines, streams which were never there before. The introduction of animals of all kinds that can live in a newly-created but functioning ecological balance. Children and adults would from time to time retire to the countryside and build and live in their own dwellings there.

The creation of large, continuous green areas will be facilitated by the abolition of roads. "Paths" will remain, for pedestrians and cyclists. The moving of goods, refuse and smaller means of transport will have been transferred to tunnels or aerial ropeways. All heavier traffic will have been raised up into the air where there is space for vertically arranged routes instead of a road system which is polluting and wasteful of horizontal space at ground level. Cars will have been replaced by communal mini-helicopters which can be called and landed by remote-controlled autopilot. A network of jumbo-helicopters will have replaced lorries, buses and underground trains—with spectacular towers for getting on and off. (All this until the problem of dematerialized transportation has been solved, i.e. people and objects "reconstituted" in the desired place...)

— To counteract isolation, the extended family will always have a number of *guests*. Technicians, administrators and artists need to live in close touch with people in various different



The draft resisters. Per Kågesson, Ö.F., Sigvard Olsson, Robert Carleson and others.
Photo: Carl Johan De Geer

localities, and people need to get to know and be able to question at close quarters (as opposed to contact via telecommunications) those who plan society. To entice them into experimental situations, meditation exercises, telepathy, psychodrama, group therapy and group sex.

In the same way, elderly people, foreigners, and particularly all those who have not managed to find a meaningful place in society—those who were previously described as criminals,

down-and-outs, and mental, sexual and other deviants—should live as members of various extended families. (Cf. Greenland, where once murderers were boarded with families.) Thus the socially adjusted and the socially deviant will together be able to put their way of life to the test, attain deeper awareness, and together experiment in madness.

¹ Planned in 1969 by E.A.T., Experiments in Art and Technology, New York.



to use these—previously, when we were living in the old studio near Wall Street and went out on our fire escape, the radio car stopped and the police told us off through a bullhorn.

But in the East Village, once the Lower East Side of the poor Slavonic immigrants, things are more relaxed, it's more a sort of Southern Europe. Fat mommas and fat mongrels settle down on the fire escape, and contemplate the street-life for hours on end. In the outermost and poorest part of the East Village, entire families of Puerto Ricans sit on the steps outside their door, talking, sewing, swilling beer and

listening to the radio. Even the local mortician sits with his family outside his office.

Autumn

We are on our way home from one of Barbro's expeditions to photograph facades, on which she bases her paintings. As usual we had gotten up too late, and the viewfinder shows a red dot, which means it is too dark. A biting wind sweeps down through the corridors of tall buildings lining the avenues.

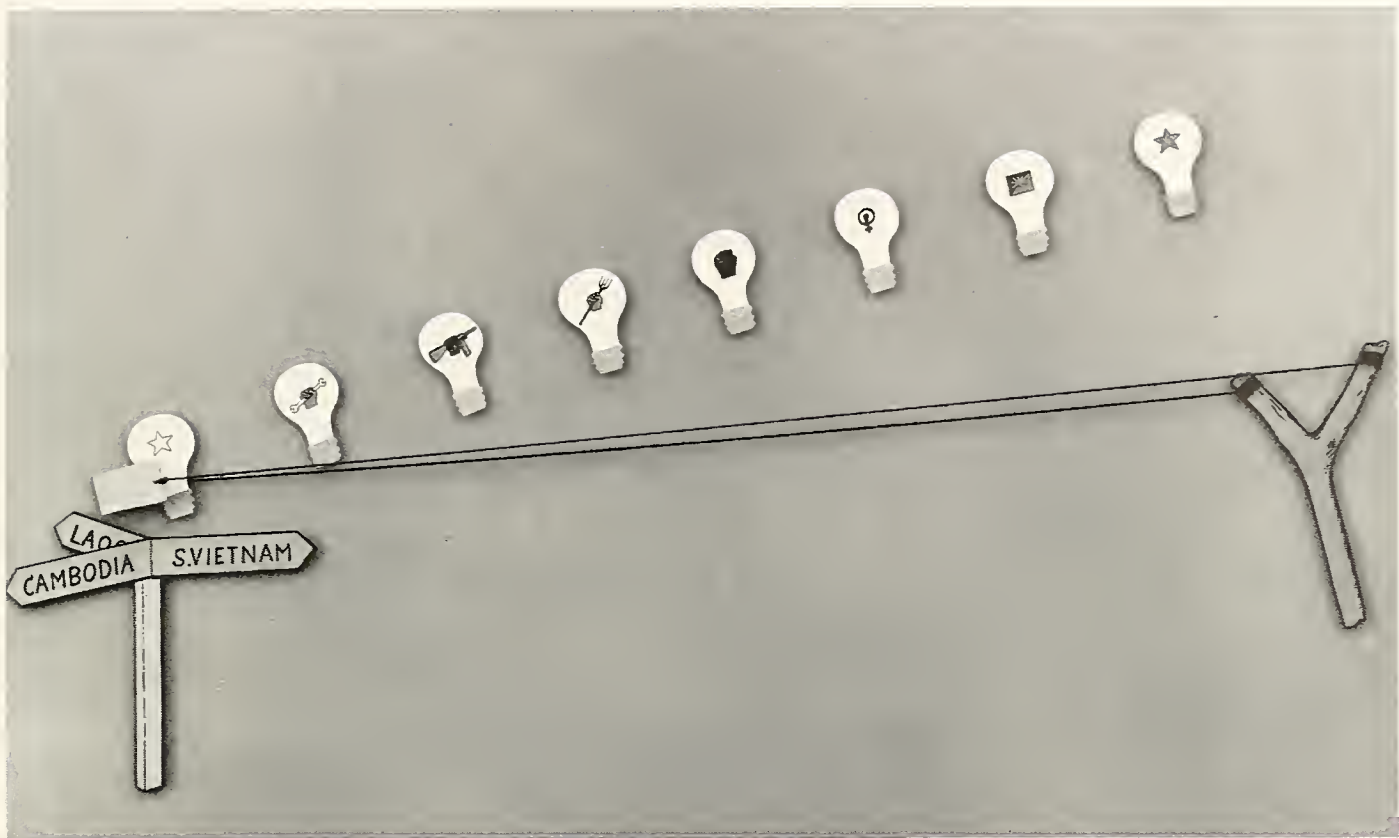
Obliquely across from the old brick

building on Lafayette Street, where Rauschenberg lives, stands an old black down-and-out, warming himself by the fire he has made by setting light to one of the city's tall wire litter bins. His coat reaches to his feet, and on his head he has a great red wollen pants-leg. He is delineated, partly lit up, partly dark, against the deep blue twilight sky.

Suddenly there is a bang, a huge flame shoots up, perhaps from some half-used spray tin among the garbage. The man's tattered coat begins to burn, he topples, and falls, fortunately, down onto the pavement so that the flames



Masses. 1971
 Acrylic on vinyl and metal, 10 metal boards, each $25\frac{1}{16} \times 25\frac{1}{16}$ " (64×64 cm.)
 Collection Gino Di Maggio



are smothered, before I reach him. He does not seem particularly deterred, and we leave him sitting within reach of the blessed warmth.

Another evening I go to see Saul, who has fallen ill. I find that he has dozed off, the apartment is silent. In the kitchen a girl from the RAT collective sits reading. Oda is out, she works with the radical women's group that has taken over the underground publication RAT. Saul and Oda have a very small apartment, low-ceilinged, seedy but cosy, masses of books and magazines, plus darkened oriental textiles.

Saul's magnificently prophetic Jewish face is emaciated but at the same time peaceful, the angry furrows at the root of his nose have smoothed out.

When I come out onto the street it has grown darker, and the Puerto Rican boys are still trying to repair something in the genitalia of a flashy fin-tail automobile that has seen better days. They are working now by the light from a fire made up in the nearest litter bin, which they have shifted down into the gutter. The transistor radio is on, the beer cans are out, and they are commenting vividly on the progress of the man crawling beneath the vehicle, which has been propped up along one side. In the fluttering flame of the fire, the scene takes on a mood at once threatening and cosy.

And then Oda rang and said that Saul had lung cancer. He had been smoking two packs of cigarettes a day for the greater part of his 47 years. He

was now at the Veteran's Hospital (having participated marginally in the Korean War), which was at least better than the poor hospital, Bellevue, the only possible alternative.

Saul had been touring in Europe with the Living Theatre, and was writing a book about them. He had been very active in the movement against the war in Vietnam. There were frequent visitors to his room at the hospital, it sometimes became almost a sort of underground literary salon—while Saul lay there somehow out of things.

"It's so stupid to die, so stupid..." he once said, desperately, and obstinately. He dug in his heels against the pessimistic prognosis of the disinterested doctors, "a few weeks left." He held out for four months.

We read that he had died in the Village Voice. It said that his friends should foregather at the La Mama Theatre. There was a problem of how to arrange the burial etc. of someone both irreligious and unconventional. Was this to be a ceremony, a reception, a funeral feast, or what?

The La Mama is a large, oblong room with tiers of benches along three of its sides. It was in semidarkness, someone was sitting improvising meditative jazz on the piano. A whole crowd of people had turned up, including numerous children who were chasing round a construction in the center of the room. A stack of black sugarcrates with a strip of red cloth draped obliquely down over it, an anarchistic emblem, unpathetically casual.

Oda came in, slim, pale and hollow-eyed, very long thin blond hair, her little daughter on her arm. Two or three people said some words in memory, including a priest who had been active in the resistance movement (bell-bottomed check trousers, white cardigan). We thought it was all over, but then La Mama herself, Ellen Stewart,

asked in her soft, Caribbean accent if perhaps anyone else felt like saying something.

So, a young man got up and started telling us about how he remembered Saul. Saul's sensitivity, plus his ingenuity in difficult situations—with the police, prying customs officials, creditors. A woman then took over, followed by Schechner, a professor of drama and leader of a group theater. Female students, bohemians, activists, dramatists . . . A middle-aged academic, an acquaintance from the fifties, talked about the days "before things began to go downhill for Saul" (dissatisfied growls from the congregation).

Without noticing it, one sat there breathlessly caught up in a theatrical performance unlike all the others at La Mama. An improvised play about a person, in which the actors and the audience were the same people.

The picture gradually emerged of a man who had left behind very few solid products, but who had clearly inspired, irritated, aroused to awareness and amused remarkably many people. Several speakers had only met him a

couple of times, but had undergone a powerful experience in these meetings, in some cases one that had changed their lives.

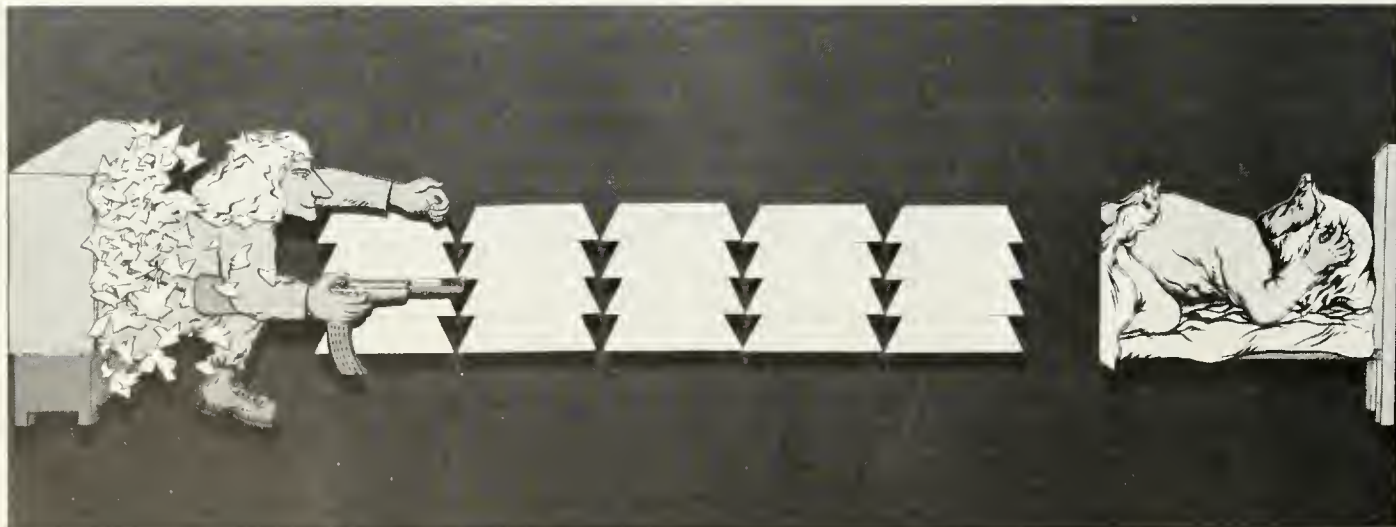
They all spoke unprepared, with that admirable ability Americans have, as naturally as if they were sitting round a table with old friends. To some extent, this was also how one began to feel. A couple of girls wept unrestrainedly as they spoke. Others narrated comic episodes. The kids made a row, and galloped tirelessly about.

Had I been able to express myself freely and unprepared in American, I would have said something like this.

"In some way, Saul, for me, was always connected with Trouble. The first time I saw him, in Paris, at the home of the sculptor Kowalski, he had just been in Cuba: he had been thrown out of there, when he tried to help some clumsy Englishman who happened to have filmed some port facilities.

On the next occasion, I read in New York how Saul had been unable to restrain himself during a destructive happening with the slaughter of chickens,

Detail from Masses





World Bank. 1971

Wood, velvet, plexiglass, vinyl, acrylic and gold foil, 20¹/₁₆ × 81⁷/₈ × 18¹/₈" (51 × 208 × 46 cm.)
Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm

and with Charlotte Moorman, who was to smash up a violin. Saul jumped forward and rescued the instrument, in a wild brawl.

Saul once assisted in organizing the sabotaging of a McCarthyist interview program on television. I remember how the lively Saul, in the studio, could not help jeopardizing our facade as innocent onlookers, armed some of us with eggs, others with hidden cameras and tape recorders. I was terribly nervous, but got by unnoticed with my bulky Nagra hidden in a bag.

Saul stormed unhesitatingly onto the stage, trying to get the interviewer up against a wall with his questions. He and a young motherfucker activist were brutally maltreated in the elevator and at the precinct station. The following morning I was with his friends down on 100 Centre Street, bailing the two of them out with the money we had scraped together. Saul showed us the bare spots on his scalp where the cops had pulled out hanks of his hair.

Two weeks later Oda rang again, wondering if I could come down to

Centre Street. For what? We had all taken part in an illegal demonstration the day before, but had escaped being picked up. Ah yes, but on the way home Saul had tried to incite some soldiers of the Salvation Army to take sides against the cops, and had immediately been pulled in.

We saw a lot of each other during the lively spring of '68. In the fall, he almost succumbed to the burden of work and responsibility as manager for the Living Theater's tour in the States, and leader of a radical group theater



Early Notes 13. 1973
Acrylic and ink on paper, 10 × 13" (25.4 × 33 cm.)
The Kempe Collection

Column No. 1 ("Wonderbread"). 1972
Acrylic and ink on paper, 23¼ × 41 7/8" (59 × 48 cm.)
Courtesy Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

agency. A greedy lawyer finally put a stop to that activity.

Then we were in Sweden for a long time. Last spring Saul and Oda were to come up to us with Barbro's sewing-machine, which they had borrowed. But the sewing machine had been stolen, and as usual they were short of money. Saul was busy with a workshop about the economic theories of the early Anarchists.

When I came back last fall, Saul was sick. He was often resigned, tortured.

But he fought, angrily, against this new and greatest Trouble. Oda read books about the right food when sick, and tried to give him a natural diet and vitamins (instead of the wretched hospital food)."

Meanwhile the mood has shifted. Two women are speaking critically about Saul's not having understood Women's Liberation. Someone says that this is ridiculous, working ourselves up to a confessional mood and letting our egos

hang out (and with La Mama as usual expressing thanks for each solo performance). We should embrace each other. Dance. Sing. Offer each other smokes. Saul's academic friend objects: "Let us part in silence."

The meeting dissolves in heated disputes, while a young man starts rolling and offers marihuana in cigarette papers decorated all over with the American flag. Saul would have approved the end of his funeral feast.

1972-73

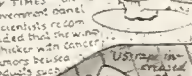
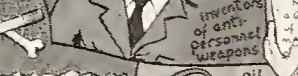
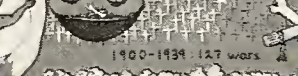
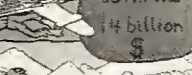
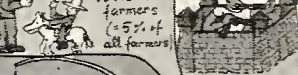
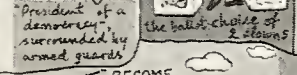
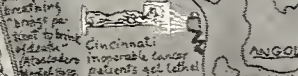
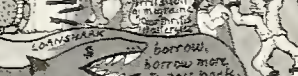
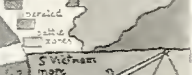
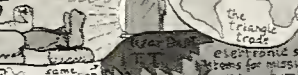
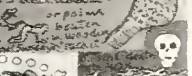
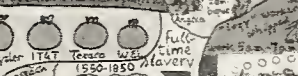
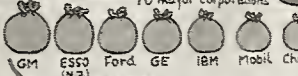
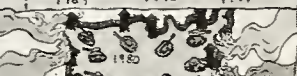
torpedos - cost overrun - 3 times the impact as we spend on least middle income housing in entire US (Senator Feinstein)

"BARBED TAPE"

Fred from NARML
Philadelph

Recall of 1940s
military expenditures

US\$65.105 million
poor (4-person family
below 3000\$ indivi-
dual below 1500)





World Map. 1972

Acrylic on vinyl and board, 36 x 72 in. (91.5 x 183 cm)

Collection Godula Buchholz, Munich





S.O.M.B.A. (Some of My Basic Assumptions). 1973
Variable painting, acrylic on vinyl and metal panel, 59 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 110 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (152 × 280 cm.)
Collection Städtische Galerie im Lehnbachhaus, Munich

Ö.F.:

S.O.M.B.A. (Some of My Basic Assumptions) Variable painting 1972–73

1. **Basic Assumption.** All people are different, but everyone is of equal worth.

2. **Class. Needs.** Marxism is about destroying class differences, not differences between individuals.

"From everyone according to his ability, to everyone according to his needs."

3. **"Human Nature."** Are people intrinsically evil (aggressive, etc.)? Or are they basically good?

People are conditioned by society.

"There are no evil people, only evil governments." (Ho Chi Min)

4. **The Brain, The Family.** "After humans were born, their brain almost trebled in size. Thus childhood had to

be lengthened. . . . This brain, divested of its precise instinctive responses, would learn how to utilize what it received from others." (L. Eiseley)

Pressured to survive, unsure of their instinctual responses, humans develop neurosis: a mechanism for adjusting to society.

Neurosis is transferred through gen-

erations and is institutionalized. The neurotic-repressive-patriarchal family: a model for society. (Wilhelm Reich)

5. Two Economies. A) Capitalism. Lopsided development: development for the strongest, for "the best." (Up: wealth and power for the elite; consumer goods; technology; elite education. Down: employment and job control; health pensions, schools, housing, etc.).

Basis: profit. People are a factor of production, a mean to an end: capital output.

B) China. Development for all (even for the weakest).

Basis: cooperation. Production is a mean, people are an end. (Even if efficiency is lowered).

6. Capitalism. What is wrong with capitalism? It benefits the few and exploits the many.

It promotes greed. The stock market: playing Monopoly with the fruits of people's labor.

It promotes aggressiveness. (In English, "aggressive" is frequently used in a positive sense). USA: world record of homicides — 6.8 per 100,000 persons. (No. 2: Finland — 3.4 per 100,000). USA: 190 million privately owned guns — an average of 1-1/2 per household.

USA: the slaughter of a small country (Vietnam). The basic paradox: since people are conditioned by society, society should be good, or should be changed. But people are already shaped by no-good societies.

"Thus the existing society is reproduced not only in the minds of men, but also in their senses, and no persuasion can break this petrified sensibility." (Marcuse)

7. Gradualism. Recommended by American Social Democrats. Implemented by Labor governments in Western Europe.

The program: by reforms, undermine and ultimately break capitalism.

The reality: strengthen the Social Democratic and union bureaucracy, while co-administering the nation with the capitalist powers. The result is to legitimize and to strengthen capitalism.

In addition, the myth "we have contained capitalism." People are pacified with certain reforms and with consum-

Detail. Photo: O. E. Nelson



er goods. Payed for with high taxes and prices.

Sweden. After forty years of Labor rule: 6 per cent of business nationalized, 5 per cent owned by the cooperative movement.

8. The Knot of Imperialism: Expansion and Racism. The capitalist firm, based on the profit motive, tends to produce more than can be consumed.

The expansion spiral: more profit buys more machines that produce more goods. So the corporations "must strive to acquire new markets in both the product and the geographical senses. One leads to conglomeration, the other to multinationalism." (P. Sweezy)

Racism: (white) Americans are the Master Race.

"Without air supremacy, we would be an easy prey for any yellow dwarf with a pocket-knife" (Lyndon Johnson). "A Mongoloid Trotskyite" (*Time* magazine on Ho Chi Min)

On the battlefield, the "Viet Cong" are seen as "fanatics." "VC" is a pun on WC, promoted by the US psychological warfare.

"The struggle against imperialism is partly a struggle to see the Vietnamese as human beings." (Tom Hayden)

9. Three Dictatorships. USA: dictatorship of profit. USSR: dictatorship of the Party.

China: dictatorship of Party and people. On the national level: complete top-down control. (1970 Cambodia invasion: a million demonstrators in Peking. 1972 mining of Haiphong: not one demonstrator. Nixon's visit to China: no discussion of this among the people). On the local level, extensive participation, especially since the Cultural Revolution.

In the ideal People's Republic of the future:

1) decentralize most power functions

2) rotate all key positions

3) create channels for participation (videophone debates?—homes and jobs hooked into computers for national, regional and local referenda?)

10. Martians. We are like Martians on this planet. (The industrial nations in Europe, America, USSR, Japan, etc.)

Alienated: from our body—our mind—our work—society—elite or garbage culture—nature—the world.

A colossal waste of the energy of people's lives.

11. The Revolt of The Sixties. Palestinians, N. Ireland, Uruguay, Bangladesh and W. Bengal, Indochina, etc.

USA. The National Guard was called out—1920—30: 78 times; 1940—50: 22; 1967: 25; 1968: 104.

France. Paris, May 1968, workers and students unite. Factories occupied. But the Stalinist CP and union stall until it is too late.

"The new sensibility has been the great force in the first powerful rebellion /Paris, May 68/ for a qualitatively different way of life." (Marcuse)

During crisis, radical consciousness grows naturally. Thought and action go hand in hand. Personal and social liberation. National (or racial) struggle and class struggle.

12. Three If's. The Left in "peace"—time: confusion, infighting, and endless splits.

The radical groups in USA might become a force.

IF they unite for larger actions (strikes, demonstrations). And in the future: if they form a coalition Third Party, and put out a widespread daily newspaper of the Left.

IF they find where their communi-

ties are, and how to connect to them. (Women, minorities, interest groups, neighborhood activity).

IF the individuals are able to know themselves. They study theories of revolution, but in their life they occasionally act according to patriarchal petty bourgeois values. And are unable to attract new people into the movement.

13. Three Risks. The Women's Movement. Involution: personal liberation, meditation, therapy, etc. as an end in itself. i.e. to be contented in a sick society.

Separatism: for instance, Black nationalism, Black political power, African life-style, etc. as an end.

Fashion. Two weeks after Nixon's visit to China: "Mao-suits" in New York's upper East Side stores. Ten months later: Mao-prints by Andy Warhol.

Could a radical women's movement tip the scale in the USA?

Maybe, since the women's movement (along with labor) is the only potential mass movement in the USA. Also the women's will to change grows out of their entire life situation: an evolving, self-made new consciousness.

It could lead to "a weakening of the primary aggressiveness which, by biological and social factors, has governed the patriarchal culture. . . . In Delacroix's painting, it is a woman that leads the people on the barricades. She carries a rifle, for the end of violence has still to be fought for." (Marcuse)

14. Future Society. No existing socialist nation is a truly integrated People's Republic. But there are some good micro-societies: collectives in China and in the West, liberated areas in Indochina, Africa, etc.

Six points for a future society (based

on an article by P. Sweezy, *Monthly Review*, 1972: 2).

EQUALITY: not only in a material sense, but in access to education and power. Workers must participate in management, managers in manual work.

FREEDOM of discussion and criticism. And of creative expression. Not by creating a state-financed elite of fantasy parasites—but by artists participating in society, on all levels (“pure” and applied art, social projects, manual work).

COMBINE agricultural and industrial development, and **DECENTRALIZE:** break up urban agglomeration.

WORK: must become not only a means—for production, for income etc.—but be dealt with as “life’s most important creative activity.” — (And in Utopia: everyone a life-artist.)

BALANCE. “Needs like food, shelter, leisure, etc., must be brought into balance with each other, and with society’s resources and the environment. The absurd and disastrous bourgeois notion of insatiable wants must be repudiated.”

SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTION. Eliminate the present system of distribution: services and goods acquired through earning and spending of money. Free services and goods (according to need). An end to all relations between value and commodity.

15. A New Sensibility. “The new rebellion is both moral and aesthetic, rather than a clear-cut class struggle.” (Marcuse)

Vietnam. According to Kim Chi, a Vietnamese woman teacher, the NLF soldier should combine an “imposing appearance” with a “romantic quality.... He shows his ‘romantic quality’ when he installs a wire on the trees in such a manner that birds can perch on it and sing on it.”

NLF-bulletin: “Soldier, spring in Vietnam is ineffably beautiful. Apricot blossoms cheer your feats, and swallows soar, waiting for good tidings. Fire of outrage, once your eyes have been opened. And, in lieu of flowers and ornament, Vietnam’s spring with everlasting beauty!”

USA and Western Europe. The three major trends

1. Dada. Zen. John Cage. The sixties: new art, poetry, music, dance, events, mixed media. The Living Theater. Counterculture, new life-style, communalism, new drugs.

2. Ways to self-realization. Mysticism, meditation. New Psychology. Reich, Lowen, Janov, Schultz, Perls, Laing.

3. New consciousness: women, minorities.

USSR: the political (material) revolution that never grew into a psychological revolution.

USA. Maybe, in the future, USA will generate some kind of psychological revolution. But will it ever become political?

The dilemma: can you be happy (individual happiness = the deep and total being in the Now) and still feel enough outrage to rebel?

16. To Rebel. The rebel/radical

— is not a “fanatic” (brave enemies of USA, are at best “fanatical”)

— is not moved by the intellectual appeal of an ideology

— is not a pragmatist, looking for success stories (Social Democrats like Harrington, etc.: US is capitalist, China is totalitarian, everything so bad, so sad...)

Being radical is about moral commitment. A sense of outrage, once your eyes have been opened. And, ideally, it should permeate every aspect of your life.

Question no. 1 for the future. Will “the worms” erode the existing, capitalist or socialist-bureaucratic power structures?

China: local self-management. USSR: underground dissent. USA and Western Europe: movements of women, minorities, anti-Vietnam war, rank and file. Third World: liberation movements.

17. My Work. “The bourgeois artist paints the hulk of a sinking ship.” (B. Brecht)

Question: isn’t it “radical chic” to try to sell paintings criticizing capitalism, to rich people and institutions in USA?

1. As long as you live in a capitalist system, you are a part of it, whether you make art or drive cabs.

2. Supposing I were to sell a work to Mr. X, he would have to pay my price, thus enabling me to go on with my work. Supposing I had to drive one of X’s cabs, I would have to take what he offered me, and I would be unable to do art work.

(P.S. Remember, your art works are purchased with stolen money—surplus taken from workers.)

3. Only via art gallery shows do you reach out to museums, print editions, books, etc.

Ideally, I would like to make enough money to subsidize mass multiples of my works, priced like LP’s and books. Ultimately, a self-supporting alternative distribution system.

4. For me, it has been important to demonstrate in my works that “heavy” art (not cartoons, etc.) can be critical and socially concerned. Of course, most heavy art is not a tool for political change.

But artists can be (could be). Organize. Publish. Speak. Demonstrate. Strike. Work in community.



Column No. 2 (Picasso 90). 1973
Silkscreen, 23 1/4 x 18 7/8" (59 x 48 cm.)
Courtesy Sidney Janis Gallery, New York



Column No. 4 (IB-Affair). 1974

Silkscreen, 23 1/4 x 18 7/8" (59 x 48 cm.)

Courtesy Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Photo: O. E. Nelson



"At Five in the Afternoon" (Chile 2: the Coup. Words by Plath and Lorca). 1974
Variable structure, elements on glass-fiber rods, acrylic on vinyl and metal board,
105 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 63 × 44 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (269 × 160 × 112 cm.)
Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne,
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris



Ö.F.:

Recently I have been making hundreds of improvisations to arrive at shapes that are both interesting in themselves, and totally "un-natural" to the factual content and to the space needed for the facts. At best these clashes result in forms that may have something of the surprising beauty of tropical fish.

In my last works (the two Chile paintings and *Latin America Puzzle*) historic and economic data largely have been supplanted by "facts" taken from poems by Sylvia Plath and Lorca.

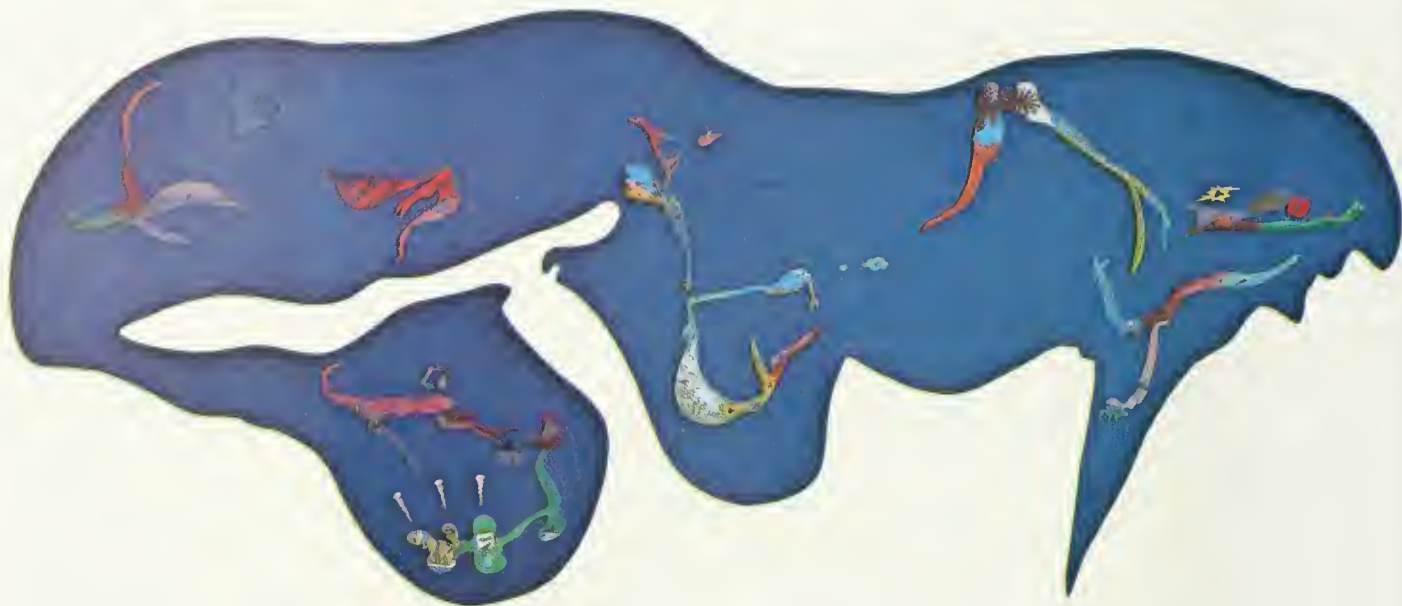
The loss of Chile cannot be expressed merely by depicting a succession of events. In Latin America, trade imbalance, foreign aid stipulations, monoculture, denationalization, etc., are not dry textbook facts, but conditions that involve immeasurable suffering and degradation.

Those who consider the musical and poetical dimension of my work as an evasion or as an opportunistic sugar-coating of serious conditions, I would remind of the scene in *Tosca* where

torture goes on off-stage. Meanwhile, on stage, Puccini's belcanto flows. This seemingly tasteless juxtaposition illustrates a basic paradox in the art of all times.

That is, the search to create a fusion of insight and pleasure. To formulate the terrifying shortness of life and the terrible shortcomings in a world where we struggle to experience and to create happiness.

1974



Night Music 2: Cancer Epidemic Scenario (Words by Trakl, Lorca and Plath). 1975 (2 phases)
 Variable painting, magnetic elements, acrylic and ink on vinyl and metal, 40 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 93 $\frac{5}{16}$ " (102 x 237 cm.)
 Collection Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Photo: O. E. Nelson



Pontus Hultén: Öyvind Fahlström, Citizen of the World

What struck me every time I met Öyvind was his purity, his integrity. He was, without doubt, the least corrupted person I have ever met. The day Öyvind died, the world became a poorer place; a very unusual and remarkable person was lost. Öyvind was an artist, a writer, and a journalist. He was a completely international person, with an infinite curiosity about life in all its forms, a wide knowledge of the most disparate subjects, and he was also a very courageous man . . .

It seems to me now in retrospect as if Öyvind represented, in the best possible way, the generation which was involved with the revolutionary movements leading up to May 1968. He represents them because he was such a typical campaigner of that period, and he represents them in the extraordinary quality that characterizes all his contributions before, during and after that important year. It is no coincidence that some of the best criticism that was expressed of the political movements, opinions and ideas of 1968 is to be found in Öyvind's film, *Provocation*. It will be no surprise if in the future this film comes to be regarded as one of the prime sources for a better knowledge and understanding of that fantastic moment in modern history, of the ideas and problems raised by events and developments for those involved or just interested, when the Spring of 1968 was over.

Öyvind was an international person, not just because he was born in Brazil of Swedish and Norwegian parents, and during his short life lived in Stockholm, New York, Paris and Italy, and could read at least five languages, but

primarily because his way of thinking was completely international, and he was always aware of the world as an integral whole. He designed many maps of the world according to his own concepts. He was well-read on Africa, South America and the Far East; he read about geography, economics, history . . . He delighted in the diversity and richness of the world; he was always interested in the new, the unusual and the striking. He wanted to become better acquainted with the absurd and the shocking, and he was increasingly disturbed by the unjust organization of the world and the brutality of political and economic power.

Öyvind's curiosity, however, was not restricted to modern history and present world conditions. When I first met him some time at the beginning of the fifties, he had just finished with his Pre-Columbian studies. (Old Mexican manuscripts had an influence on his first paintings.) He had been immersing himself for some time in the history of Surrealism, and was already familiar with it in all its details. In 1953 that was rather unusual, and it was hardly useful or widespread knowledge in academic or other circles. He knew every phase in the various quarrels and controversies within the Surrealist group, the intrigues, the excommunications; but he was also well-acquainted with Surrealist painting, poetry, films . . . It is obvious from the first large painting Öyvind produced, *Ade-Ledic-Nander*, which he had begun the following year, that he must also have studied astronomy, theories on the origin of the planets, and that he had read the new science-fiction books that had started

to appear at that time. He had an enormous appetite for knowledge, but his choice of reading matter was totally unacademic. His desire for knowledge was very soon to be supplemented by an urge to create: and his creations were to be just as unusual and surprising.

His *Ade-Ledic-Nander* period lasted three years. The larger of the two paintings, number two, now in the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, occupied him for the greater part of that time. During that period I got to know Öyvind well. Every Friday evening he used to invite all those who were interested to come and look at the progress of the painting. His demonstration technique was unconventional. Having cut holes in a sheet which he had then hung in front of the canvas, he would describe only that part which could be seen through the hole. This was to ensure that his audience would not be distracted by other parts of the painting and would not be led astray by aesthetic considerations, such as admiring the composition in its entirety. He maintained that he also kept the sheet there while he was painting in order not to be tempted himself to make concessions to the composition as a whole at the cost of content. Discussions in the art world during those years were very much concerned with the question of to what extent art should be figurative or non-figurative. Öyvind's painting, of course, was neither the one nor the other. It depicted only what was to be found in Öyvind's personal visionary world or worlds. Decorative effects from non-figurative art had no place there.

Öyvind was living at that time in a small apartment in Sundbyberg, at Råsundavägen 55–57. During the season, the cheering when a goal was scored in the matches at Råsunda football stadium could be heard as an accompaniment to Öyvind's descriptions of his painting. These descriptions were extraordinarily complicated and difficult to follow; they were a kind of abstract science-fiction concerned only with the elements of the world that he had invented and fixed on the canvas.

The creation of *Ade-Ledic-Nander* also became more and more fascinating because of the very special way Öyvind went to work. During the latter part of the period he was working on it, he had to construct a sort of jetty or bridge over the painting, which was lying flat on the floor, in order to be able to get to the parts in the middle which he could no longer reach from the sides. Öyvind's methods of solving practical problems were always very unusual.

I do not think that Öyvind ever made any particular efforts to draw attention to himself, or to get people to write about him in the newspapers, for example. But he was in the news at least twice during his time in Sweden: he was involved in two "scandals." On each occasion the affair was blown up out of all proportion. He had a keen sense of the ridiculous. He never told funny stories; it was the absurdity of life that he managed to catalyse and express.

The first time Öyvind found himself on the front pages was early in his career. Somebody had decided to put on an exhibition of a form of art called Tachisme, which most people have now fortunately forgotten all about. For not very obvious reasons Öyvind had been invited to take part. He was away at the time and could not arrange



Paris 1973. Erró, Ö.F., Barbro Östlihn, Pontus Hultén

the delivery of his paintings or supervise the hanging of them. He left a parcel of the paintings with a friend, to be collected by the exhibition organizers. In the exhibition, they displayed the pieces of cardboard which Öyvind had used as packing and which he had earlier used to wipe his brushes on. What outraged Öyvind so much in these particular circumstances was that professional people could believe that his painting could look like that, and he was so shaken that he went to the papers to get publicity for the whole affair. But I think that Öyvind always had a very special and personal, a kind of elastic, relationship to reality. He was impractical to such an extent that it became something else altogether. The simplest way to describe Öyvind's perception of the world would probably be to say that for him nothing was impossible. His impracticality was so extreme that it was a gift, a talent, a form of freedom. The technical side of painting remained for Öyvind a kind of

enchanted forest where he could meet with unforeseen success or where the worst possible misfortunes could be lying in wait. On the occasions when he collaborated with engineers or scientists on a project, things always went very well, probably because Öyvind, unlike most other artists, had no preconceptions of how his ideas were to be realized. He left all decisions on practical matters to the engineers with whom he was collaborating.

Öyvind's very special kind of relationship to the world made his mode of existence at one and the same time conventional and unconventional. I believe he used certain conventions as anchors to fasten himself in some way to the world we live in. They were a kind of tacit arrangement—links which made everyday life easier, but which he was not inclined to discuss; they were "practical" measures, nothing more. On the other hand, Öyvind was so unconventional in other respects, especially concerning everything to do with



Svish, a group of "concrete" poets of which O.F. was the spiritual father, at Moderna Museet, 1964, from l. to r.: O.F., Torsten Ekblom, Mats G. Bengtsson, Ake Hodell, Elis Eriksson, Leif Nylen, Bengt-Emil Johnson, Jarl Hammarberg. Photo: Lutfi Özkök

the creative side of his art, that he could surprise even the most advanced colleagues of his generation.

Perhaps the story of Öyvind's other "scandal" in Stockholm can shed a little light on his attitude to conventions. On this occasion there was more provocation than when he hit the headlines the first time. Öyvind had been invited to take part in a television debate about drugs. After a while the discussion was taking its usual course, when Öyvind suddenly picked up a pipe and said, "This pipe is full of marijuana, and I intend to smoke it

now; you'll see me start to have hallucinations, and in any case you'll have to send for the police so that they can arrest me." For several days Öyvind was the "drug-tripper" in the newspapers. Whether it was marijuana or tobacco in the pipe was never established, but I should think it was marijuana. Öyvind was always very moral in his methods; it might look as if he was cheating, as for instance in the story of Mao and Bob Hope, but he never did. His method, one might say, was morality. But of course it was his own definition of morality that he

used, composed of his own set of conventions.

When Öyvind came to New York at the beginning of the sixties, he very quickly became part of the city's international art circles. He met and became friendly with all the members of the first and second generation of Pop-artists: Rauschenberg and Johns, Oldenburg, Dine, Rosenquist, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Segal and others. Their art is individually distinctive; but Öyvind's was different in a fundamental way. While the Pop artists attempted to subjugate the elements of

American daily life in order thus to reestablish the links between art and life, leaving, like Rauschenberg for example, a sufficiently large gap between the two to be able to give at least a glimpse of the future, Öyvind could never from the very first ignore his interest in the world as an entity and in its moral and political aspects. In New York in those days that way of looking at things was called "European," but I think that in Öyvind's case it was his own personal position. During the following years, when he returned to Europe virtually every summer, it was always the same Öyvind one met, full of plans, intense and single-minded. In some ways he changed very little over the years. In New York he developed what was to become his future lifestyle: working at night, sleeping in the morning, studying and collecting material for his works in the afternoon, sometimes going to the opening of an exhibition or to a film in the evening. Öyvind was the only artist I have met who could paint and watch television at the same time. The actual execution of the painting, the craftsmanship, did not interest him, and he would sometimes leave it to others, who according to him could do it better than he could. His wife, Barbro Östlihn, was responsible for practical matters for many years, even in respect to many of the paintings. Öyvind would already have worked out the whole content of the picture in his head and in drawings, and the rest was merely a question of implementing the idea. As he was finishing one painting, he was already thinking of the next; he would be in a



Ö.F. with part of Dr. Schweitzer . . . Venice 1966. Photo: Harry Shunk

ferment with all the facts and ideas he had in hand at that moment: political facts and events, historical facts, spy-stories, anecdotes, social items, ghost-stories of various kinds, scandals, oddities from the gutter-press . . . It cannot be said that Öyvind's art became more personal during these years, but it seems to me that his art was always entirely uninfluenced by others, and it became more characteristic and coherent. In the last years before his death, something of the occasional stiffness

disappeared; the pictures became softer and the compositions more flowing and harmonious. Öyvind had found a method of working which he had long sought.

At the time of his death the world of art, with the exception of a few of his colleagues, had not yet discovered that Öyvind was one of the great artists of his era. This exhibition will show the richness and freshness in this art, created by a very unusual person who was also the most lovable friend.

August 1979

Biography

1928

Öyvind Axel Christian Fahlström born 28th December in São Paulo, Brazil, son of Frithjof Fahlström, b. Trondheim, Norway, 1886, and Karin Fahlström, née Kronvall, b. Stockholm 1900. Becomes Brazilian citizen. Grows up in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

1939

Sent to Sweden to spend summer with relatives. Outbreak of war prevents parents from following. School in Sweden. Excused from drawing.

1947

Reunited with parents in Sweden. Becomes Swedish citizen.

1949–52

Studies archeology and history of art at Stockholm University. "A surrealist period." Ö.F.

1950–55

Theater and poetry, journalism, criticism.

1952

Completes **Opera**, 27 × 1185 cm. Marriage to Birgitta Tamm.

1953

One-man exhibition at Galleria Numero, Florence. "Drawings in Flomaster method." Ö.F.
Publishes **Hipy Papy Bthuthdth Thuthda Bthuthdy. Manifesto for Concrete Poetry.**

1955–57

Completes **Ade-Ledic-Nander I** and **II**, as parts of a planned series of "sign-form" paintings.



Dressed for the Carnival. São Paulo 1933

1955

Opera exhibited at Galerie Creuze, Paris. Exhibition at Galerie Aesthetica, Stockholm. "Signifiguration." Ö.F.

1956

Participates in *Exposition Phases*, Paris.

1958

Contract with Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris. Divorce from Birgitta Tamm.

1959

One-man exhibition at Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris, and Galerie Blanche, Stockholm.
Prize for *Ade-Ledic-Nander II* at São Paulo Bienal.

1960

Marriage to Barbro Östlihn.
Participates in *Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture* at Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute.

1961

Award from Sweden-America Foundation for studies in USA. Lives and works henceforth in New York, spends summers in Sweden and Italy. Begins work on *Sitting ...* sequence.

1962

First variable painting: **Sitting ... Six Months Later.**
One-man exhibition at Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris. Participates in *New Realists* at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

1962–64

Happenings at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, and on Swedish television. Publishes word-game **Memorandum for Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission.** **Birds in Sweden** broadcast on Swedish radio.

1962–65

Participates in numerous group exhibitions at Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, Alternative Attuali, Aquila, Guggenheim Museum, New York, and Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

1964

Venice Biennale. One-man exhibition at Cordier and Ekström Gallery, New York.

1965

Writes plays **Hammar skjöld on God**, which is staged by Pistolteatern,

Stockholm, 1966, directed by Sören Brunes, and **The Brothers Strindberg** (French translation by J. Robnard, 1966). *The Brothers Strindberg* produced summer 1967 in New York at Theater of the Ridiculous under direction of Michael Abrams. Contract with Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. **Holy Torsten Nilsson**, a five-hour sound-novel, broadcast on Swedish radio.

1966

First variable multiples. Represents Sweden at Venice Biennale (most important work **Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission**, 1964–66). Gives performance **Kisses Sweeter than Wine** for nine evenings: Theater and Engineering, organized by Experiments in Art and Technology, E.A.T. at 26th Street Armory, New York. Completes **Roulette**, first painting with oil on photograph (shown at exhibition *Erotic Art* at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York). *Bord [Worlets']* (poems 1950–55) published by Bonniers, Stockholm. *Mao-Hope-March* (16 mm film).

1967

Makes two documentary films in New York for Swedish TV, partly on anti-war movement (16 mm b/w). Writes play **Oswald Comes Back**. One-man exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Completes first work in which oil on photograph elements float on water (**Parkland Memorial**). Version for Swedish radio of *Kisses Sweeter than Wine*. Bonniers publishes *Holy Torsten Nilsson* as book. Monograph in series Bonniers Little Art Books, Stockholm. Participates in exhibitions *Science Fiction* (Bern, Brussels, etc.); *Toward a Cold Poetic Image*, Galleria Schwartz, Milan, Swedish-French Art Gallery, Stock-

holm; *Pictures to be Read / Poetry to be Seen*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and Milwaukee Art Center, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; *Homage to Marilyn Monroe*, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Retrospective in PEN-TACLE exhibition at Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, including the large pool **The Little General**.

1968

Completes the play **Forgive Hitler. Eddie in the Desert**, **Collage** donated to The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Included in *Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection*, shown in USA and Europe during 1968–70. Participates in *Documenta*, Kassel. Makes a 30-minute film **U-Barn** (35 mm, b/w and color).

1969

Participates in exhibition *Spirit of Comics* at Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia. One-man exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. One-man exhibition of smaller works organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. One-man exhibition at Galerie Zwirner, Cologne. Participates in group exhibition *Seven Artists* at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, and in *Pop Art Redefined* at Hayward Gallery, London. **Meatball Curtain** (variable sculpture) shown at exhibition *Art and Technology*, organized by Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1970. Makes feature film *Provocation (Du Gamla Du Fria*, 35 mm, color).

1970

Participates in exhibitions *String and Rope* and *Seven Artists*, at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Starts working on game-paintings (**Monopoly sequence**). Participates in

exhibition *Light-Objects-Movement-Space. Swedish Art Today* shown in Nuremburg, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart. Writes screenplay for feature film (love between the elderly, and rebellion, in a mental hospital).

1971

Participates in group exhibition *Chance* at Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia. One-man exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Lithograph of **108 Dollar Bill**, commissioned by E.A.T.

On the Art of Life, etc., a selection of articles by Ö.F., is published by Bonniers. – Radio collage **The Cell** (including interviews with cancer patients) for Swedish radio.

1972

Provocation shown at Venice Film Festival.

Participates in *Swedish Art 1972: A Contemporary Theme* at National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto. Detail from **Drawing for World Map** published by *Liberated Guardian*, in edition of 7000 copies. **World Bank** selected for *New York Collection for Stockholm*, **Notes 7 ("Gook" Masks)** produced by Leblanc, Paris, as hand-colored etching. Writes stage play **Dream Animal**.

1973

One-man exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Detail from **World Map – A Puzzle** published in *Reality and Paradox: A Portfolio of Seven Prints* by Multiples Inc., New York. Completes **Column No. 2** (silk-screen in 25 colors) which is included in series *Hommage à Picasso*. Writes play **Black Room** with material

from Watergate scandal, translated into English. One-man exhibition at Moore College of Art Gallery, Philadelphia, and at Foster Gallery, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

1974

One-man exhibition at Galerie Buchholz, Munich. **Die Zeit** publishes article and a print **Column no. 4, (IB-Affair)**.

Folder of 10 silkscreen prints in color published by Galleria Multipla, Milan. One-man exhibition at Galleria Multipla, Milan.

1975

One-man exhibition at Galerie Alexandre Iolas, Paris. Prize for print **Seven S.O.M.B.A. Elements** at *Tokyo International Graphics Biennale*. Exhibition *Let's Mix All Feelings Together* (Baruchello, Erró, Fahl-

ström, Liebig) shown in museums in Munich, Frankfurt, Leverkusen, etc. Makes print for Editions Maeght in series *Artists/Writers Collaboration*. Makes drafts for Mulino Stucky, Venice Biennale.

1976

Participates in exhibition *Drawing Now*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, which is also shown in museums in Zürich, Baden, Vienna, Oslo and Tel-Aviv. One-man exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

Participates in *Present Projects*, Galleri Léger, Malmö.

Divorce from Barbro Östlihn.

One-man exhibition of graphics, Galleri Ahlner, Stockholm.

Marriage to Sharon Avery.

Dies of cancer 8th November in Stockholm.

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1950

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Müüüm et les porte-voix (poem).

Rixes; 1, 1950

1951

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Expr. 6/6-51

On the film "Faith."*

Expr. 14/6-51

1952

Squabbling about jazz.*

Expr. 23/2-52

A final replay on the art of jazz.*

Expr. 27/2-52

And the noise became the sound of music...*

Expr. 28/8-52

Monumental miniature painting:

Mexican pictographic manuscripts.*

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1953

Contemporary Italian art.*

EtunaK 21/3-53

Jungle cries and talking drums.*

Expr. 14/4-53

The salon of forgotten painters.*

Expr. 22/5-53

The prepared piano: John Cage.*

Expr. 27/6-53

Electronic music.*

Expr. 2/7-53

Brilliant misses.*

Expr. 13/9-53

Carl Larsson: a memorial exhibition.*

EtunaK 4/11-53

Nuttiness as a philosophy of life.*

Expr. 27/12-53

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Expr. 27/12-53

The hard and the soft: a concrete drama in two acts.*

Stockholm, 1953

1954

The disguises of Copper Matty.*

Arbetaren 11/1-54

What is work worth?*

AT 17/3-54

Sven Hedin: a memorial exhibition.*

EtunaK 20/5-54

Lyric poetry can create collective rhythmic ecstasy, just as jazz can: a Concrete poet writes a programme.*

Expr. 19/7-54

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Expr. 27/8-54

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"Hipy papy Bthuthdth Thuthda Bthuthdy." Manifesto for Concrete Poetry.*

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New abstract art.*

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1955

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EtunaK 23/4-55

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Expr. 23/9-55

1956

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Expr. 9/7-56

Read here an analysis of the "world's best comic cartoon": Li'l Abner grotesque farce, fairytale and film.*

Expr. 7/8-56

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Expr. 8/8-56

The rhythm of film without tables:

Åke Bengtsson.*

Expr. 16/9-56

Underdeveloped music?*

GT 16/9-56

Capogrossi.

Konstrevy; Vol. 32, 1956,

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1957

Popularist debate on music makes it difficult for public.*

Expr. 9/2-57

Jazz can get new impulses from Indian folk-music.*

Expr. 2/3-57

Gentlemanly porn trial confiscates late Marquis de Sade.*

Expr. 27/3-57

The creators in jazz prepare for a new era.*

Expr. 1/4-57

The housing shortage makes us dummy-sucking consumers in modern slums.*

Expr. 2/5-57

- Radio music underestimates the public: stale hits; pin-up music; a garnished vacuum.*
Expr. 2/7-57
- The music buffs destroy a lot of programmes.*
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Expr. 8/7-57
- Paul Klee, the 20th century's only Renaissance artist.*
Expr. 2/8-57
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Expr. 19/8-57
- The Triennale in Milan.*
GT 1/10-57
- Jazz respectable at German festival.*
Expr. 12/12-57
- 1958**
- Count Basie's background for jam sessions in Kansas City.*
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Expr. 12/2-58
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Expr. 19/7-59
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Expr. 8/8-59
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Expr. 23/8-59
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Expr. 26/9-59
- Without irony: Ulf Karmi.*
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 Dialog; Vol. 4:4/5, 1968, pp. 29-34
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 Stockholm: The Moderna Museet.
 Arts Magazine; Vol. 45, 1970,
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 Before the Cultural Revolution?²
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 Städtische Kunsthalle, 1970

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Les jeux de monopoly.
 Opus International; 29/30, 1971,
 pp. 64-65

Utopias for Moderna Museet: Stock-
 holm 1971. – Utopias & visions:
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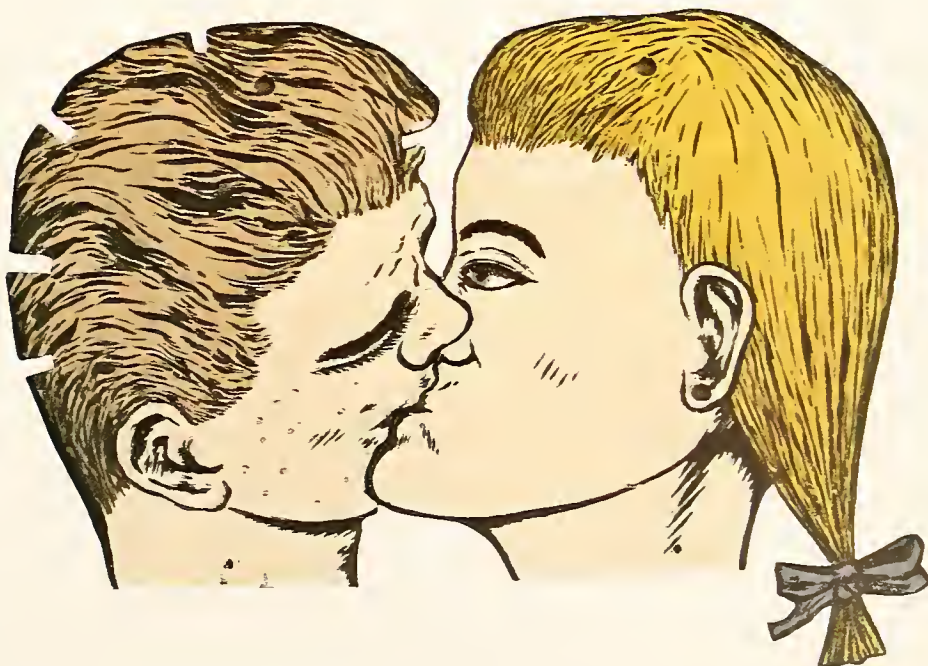
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Detail from Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission

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Night Music 2: cancer epidemic scenario. – Present projects / Georg Brecht . . .

Malmö: Galleri Leger, 1976. –
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Checklist of the exhibition

1. **Opera.** 1953–57
Gouache and ink on paper, $10\frac{5}{8} \times 466\frac{1}{2}$ " ($27 \times 1,185$ cm.)
Private Collection
2. **Ade-Ledic-Nander I.** 1955
Oil, lacquer and tempera on masonite, $25\frac{5}{8} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$ " (65×54 cm.)
Collection Robert Rauschenberg
3. **Ade-Ledic-Nander II.** 1955–57
Oil on canvas, $74\frac{1}{16} \times 83\frac{1}{16}$ " (190×211 cm.)
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
4. **Feast on Edlund.** 1955
India ink on paper, $24\frac{7}{8} \times 29\frac{1}{16}$ " (63×76 cm.)
Private Collection, Los Angeles
5. **Untitled.** 1958
Pastel and lacquer on paper, $20\frac{1}{2} \times 26\frac{3}{8}$ " (52×67 cm.)
Private Collection
6. **Feast on Mad.** 1958–59
India ink on paper, $39\frac{3}{8} \times 41\frac{1}{4}$ " (100×120 cm.)
Private Collection
7. **Dr. Livingstone, I presume, I.** 1959
Collage and tempera, $15\frac{1}{16} \times 14\frac{15}{16}$ " (39.5×38 cm.)
Private Collection, Los Angeles
8. **Klara.** 1960
Tempera and oil on paper mounted on canvas, $15\frac{5}{16} \times 24$ " (44×61 cm.)
Collection Anna Lena Wibom, Lidingö, Sweden
9. **Study for "Sitting..."**. 1962
Ink, watercolor and collage, $14\frac{1}{16} \times 18\frac{1}{8}$ " (37×46 cm.)
Collection Jasper Johns
10. **Notes for "Sitting... Six months later"**. 1962
Ink and watercolor on paper, $8\frac{1}{16} \times 11$ " (22×28 cm.)
Collection Jasper Johns
11. **Sitting....** 1962
Tempera on paper, $62\frac{5}{8} \times 79\frac{1}{8}$ " (159×201 cm.)
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
12. **Sitting... Six months later, Version A.** 1962
Variable painting with 18 movable elements, tempera on paper on canvas and metal, $22\frac{1}{16} \times 45\frac{7}{8}$ " (56×116.5 cm.)
Collection Emil Söderström, Bromma, Sweden
13. **Babies for Africa.** 1963
Variable painting in two parts, tempera and magnetic elements, $72\frac{1}{16} \times 11\frac{7}{16}$, $72\frac{1}{16} \times 44\frac{1}{8}$ " (183×29 , 183×112 cm.)
Abrams Family Collection
14. **The Planetarium.** 1963
Variable diptych, tempera on 188 magnetic cut-outs in vinyl on canvas, $22\frac{7}{16} \times 22\frac{7}{16}$, $77\frac{9}{16} \times 92\frac{1}{8}$ " (57×57 , 197×234 cm.)
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
15. **Performing K. K. No. 2. (Sunday Edition).** 1963–64
Tempera on paper mounted on canvas, $52 \times 33\frac{7}{8}$ " (132×86 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
16. **Performing K. K. No. 3.** 1965
Oil and collage on canvas with four movable magnetized parts, $54\frac{1}{2} \times 36\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{15}{16}$ " ($138.5 \times 93 \times 5$ cm.)
Collection Robert Rauschenberg
17. **The Cold War.** 1963–65
Variable diptych, tempera on steel and plastic, $94\frac{1}{2} \times 118\frac{1}{8}$ " (240×300 cm.)
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
18. **Notes for Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission, A1–2.** 1966
Acrylic and ink on paper, $29\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{16}$ " (75×50 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
19. **Notes for Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission, B1–2.** 1966
Acrylic and ink on paper, $29\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{16}$ " (75×50 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
20. **Notes for Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission. Phase 1.** 1966
Acrylic and ink on paper, $19\frac{1}{16} \times 29\frac{1}{2}$ " (50×75 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
21. **Dr. Schweitzer's Last Mission.** 1964–66
Variable painting, tempera on 10 cut-outs in iron and plastic, 8 iron boxes, 50 magnetic cut-outs in iron and plastic, approximately $177\frac{3}{16} \times 401\frac{5}{8} \times 100\frac{3}{8}$ " ($450 \times 1,020 \times 255$ cm.)
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
22. **Roulette.** 1966
Variable painting, oil on photopaper on vinyl and board, $59\frac{1}{16} \times 70\frac{1}{16}$ " (150×178 cm.)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne
23. **ESSO–LSD.** 1967
Plastic, $35\frac{1}{16} \times 50 \times 5\frac{7}{8}$ " ($89 \times 127 \times 15$ cm.)
Mr. and Mrs. William H. Wise, Palm Springs

24. **Life-Span No. 3 (Marilyn Monroe).** 1967
Variable painting, oil and enamel on photograph and vinyl on panel, $20\frac{1}{8} \times 100$ " (51×254 cm.)
Mr. and Mrs. William H. Wise, Palm Springs
25. **Model for "The Little General".** 1968
Tempera on vinyl, $30\frac{1}{8} \times 60\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$ " ($76.5 \times 154 \times 25$ cm.)
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
26. **Green Seesaw.** 1968–69
Variable structure, magnetic elements, oil on photograph on vinyl, tempera on papier-mâché, wood and metal, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 91\frac{3}{4} \times 28\frac{3}{4}$ " ($19 \times 233 \times 73$ cm.)
Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna
27. **Green Power** 1969
Variable painting, magnetic elements, oil on photograph on vinyl, acrylic on plastic flowers, $80\frac{5}{16} \times 64\frac{15}{16}$ " (204×165 cm.)
Private Collection
28. **Early Notes ('69–'70).** 1969–70
Acrylic and ink on paper, $9\frac{1}{16} \times 11\frac{13}{16}$ " (23×30 cm.)
Collection David B. Boyce, New York
29. **Notes 1 (Pentagon).** 1970
Acrylic and ink on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
30. **Notes 2 (WC's).** 1970
Ink and acrylic on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Julian I. Edison
31. **Notes 3 (Mass Elements).** 1970
Ink and acrylic on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart
32. **Notes 4 (C.I.A. Brand Bananas).** 1970
Synthetic polymer paint and ink on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Mrs. Bertram Smith Fund
33. **Pentagon Puzzle.** 1970
Variable painting, magnetic elements, acrylic on vinyl and metal board, $31\frac{1}{8} \times 40\frac{3}{16}$ " (79×102 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
34. **World Politics Monopoly.** 1970
Game-painting, acrylic on vinyl, magnets and metal board, $36\frac{1}{4} \times 50\frac{7}{16}$ " (92×128 cm.)
Private Collection
35. **Notes 5 (Wrestlers).** 1971
Ink and acrylic on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
36. **Notes 6 (Nixon Dreams).** 1971
Ink and acrylic on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Collection Gino Di Maggio
37. **Notes 7 ("Gook" Masks).** 1971
Ink and acrylic on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Collection Christer Jacobson, Bromma, Sweden
38. **Notes 8 (Crucifixions).** 1971
Ink and acrylic on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
39. **Notes 9 (Reading Felix Greene's "The Enemy").** 1971
Ink and acrylic on paper, $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14$ " (42×35.5 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
40. **Masses.** 1971
Acrylic on vinyl and metal, 10 metal boards, each board $25\frac{3}{16} \times 25\frac{3}{16}$ " (64×64 cm.)
Collection Gino Di Maggio
41. **World Bank.** 1971
Wood, velvet, plexiglass, vinyl, acrylic and gold foil, $20\frac{1}{16} \times 81\frac{7}{8} \times 18\frac{1}{8}$ " ($51 \times 208 \times 46$ cm.)
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
42. **Column No. 1 ("Wonderbread").** 1972
Acrylic and ink on paper, $23\frac{1}{4} \times 18\frac{7}{8}$ " (59×48 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
43. **Early Notes 13.** 1973
Acrylic and ink on paper, 10×13 " (25.4×33 cm.)
The Kempe Collection
44. **S.O.M.B.A. (Some Of My Basic Assumptions).** 1973
Variable painting, acrylic on vinyl and metal panel, $59\frac{7}{8} \times 110\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{13}{16}$ " ($152 \times 280 \times 30$ cm.)
Collection Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich
45. **Column No. 2 (Picasso 90).** 1973
Silkscreen, published by Propyläen Press, Berlin, $23\frac{1}{4} \times 18\frac{7}{8}$ " (59×48 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
46. **Column No. 4 (IB-Affair).** 1974
Silkscreen, $23\frac{1}{4} \times 18\frac{7}{8}$ " (59×48 cm.)
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
47. **"At Five in the Afternoon" (Chile 2: The Coup. Words by Plath and Lorea).** 1974
Variable structure, elements on glass fibre rods, acrylic on vinyl and metal board, $105\frac{7}{8} \times 63 \times 44\frac{1}{8}$ " ($269 \times 160 \times 112$ cm.)
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
48. **Night Music 2: Cancer Epidemic Scenario (Words by Trakl, Lorea and Plath).** 1975
Variable painting, magnetic elements, acrylic and ink on vinyl and metal, $40\frac{3}{16} \times 93\frac{3}{16}$ " (102×237 cm.)
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
49. **Night Music 3: Monster City Scenario (Words by Trakl, Lorea, Plath and Pietri).** 1976
Variable painting, magnetic elements, acrylic on vinyl and metal board, $55\frac{7}{8} \times 91\frac{1}{16}$ " (142×232.5 cm.)
Collection Gino Di Maggio



